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Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

Spotlight on the Capitol

*Springfield welcomes a new
governor and General Assembly*





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Peggy Boyer Long



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Paul Douglas practiced 'a liberalism that made sense to the voters'

by Peggy Boyer Long

By all appearances, Paul Douglas seems an odd choice to have represented moderate-to-conservative Illinois in the U.S. Senate during the post-World War II era, a time when equal rights for blacks was still an open public question, a time when political demagogues were claiming to find traitors in every nook and cranny.

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Paul Douglas practiced 'a liberalism that made sense to the voters'

by Peggy Boyer Long

By all appearances, Paul Douglas seems an odd choice to have represented moderate-to-conservative Illinois in the U.S. Senate during the post-World War II era, a time when equal rights for blacks was still an open public question, a time when political demagogues were claiming to find traitors in every nook and cranny.

For that matter, Douglas seems an odd choice to have served on the Chicago City Council, his first official post, during the reign of a Democratic Machine that brooked little or no dissent on its less-than-progressive turf.

Douglas seems to have been ill-suited for the rough play of Illinois and national politics, an unlikely pick by this state's voters.

His passionately held views lay on the progressive-to-radical end of the spectrum, at least in the early years. He was an intellectual, an economics professor at the University of Chicago, who built a reputation fighting against corporate monopolies and for better employee wages and benefits. He was a convinced Quaker. Though not an attender at meeting in later years, he continued to hold to most views of that sect, which likely seemed quaint to many Illinoisans, and continued to follow its practices, which likely appeared moralistic to congressional colleagues. And, as if that weren't

'To be a liberal, one does not have to be a wastrel. We must, in fact, be thrifty if we are to be really humane.'

Paul Douglas

enough, he supported socialist Norman Thomas for president, making him an easy, though false, target for the red-baiters of his time.

His was a public service that required persistence and patience.

In a new biography, *Crusading Liberal: Paul H. Douglas of Illinois*, just published by Northern Illinois University Press, historian Roger Biles reminds us that any idea of Douglas' "commonly became a law only after his unrelenting effort for a period of six to ten years."

Why would Illinoisans send this man to the U.S. Senate for three terms, a period spanning 18 years? Because, Biles argues, Douglas practiced "a liberalism that made sense to the voters."

As one example, consider the taxpayer-funded budget, something that, as we see in this month's edition of the magazine, the new governor and General Assembly will have to wrestle with this spring (see pages 16-31).

Douglas fought against wasteful pork-barrel spending nearly as hard as he fought for civil rights.

"To be a liberal," he advised, "one does not have to be a wastrel. We must, in fact, be thrifty if we are to be really humane."

And, to the end, Douglas fought for political ethics reforms, a stance that irritated his fellow public officials, but was met by appreciation from Illinois voters.

So, at a time when this state was sending a number of conservative Republicans to Washington, D.C., Douglas appealed to many Illinoisans "as a paragon of integrity who could be trusted to represent the state's interests in the national government," Biles writes.

"Without a doubt, Illinois voters saw him as an unabashed liberal; they also saw him as an honest and diligent public servant. Douglas' status as a straight-talking, issues oriented politician served him well in an era before personal celebrity, pithy sound bites, and lavish campaign chests became the prerequisites for political office-seeking."

And his enduring legacy is the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

But Douglas' conscience led to his defeat in an altogether unexpected way during his fourth run for the Senate. As a defender of America's

READER ADVICE

A balanced state budget was the top concern among readers who responded to our request to suggest a top priority for the new governor.

Most of this unscientific sample of folks, who returned survey cards inserted in the November issue, urged Gov. Rod Blagojevich to focus on fiscal matters.

One reader suggested the governor should push for a graduated income tax as a way to increase revenue, but most called for less spending. One suggestion for economy: "Stop landbanking for a south suburban airport."

At the same time, many readers proposed ways to spend state taxpayer dollars: "Make a real commitment to education"; fund "reasonable" health insurance for teachers; and implement universal health care.

One reader urged the new administration to honor the rights of all Illinoisans. Another recommended pushing government ethics reform. But the shortest answer came from one who wrote: "Honesty."

interests abroad, he ran afoul of anti-war protesters during the Vietnam era. The aging Douglas was outflanked on his left by a young corporate Republican named Charles Percy.

Still, Illinoisans of whatever party label, whatever partisan stripe, can look to Paul Douglas, who died in 1976, as a model of personal and political integrity.

• • •

This month we invited some civic-minded Illinoisans, among them our readers, to offer a bit of friendly advice to the new governor (see in particular page 32).

In that spirit, the editorial team came up with a suggestion of its own, which we address to you, Gov. Rod Blagojevich, as you prepare to move into the executive suite at the Capitol.

You'll be nearly overwhelmed by all of the big decisions that need to be made in the next few months. No doubt about it. But as you go about the business of those important matters, we suggest you keep this in mind: Springfield is a town where people have long memories for the small things.

Gene Callahan put it best in the pages of this magazine several years ago, so we'll crib from him.

"I remember everyone who has ever lied to me and never returned my phone calls," Callahan told our writer (see November 1994, page 17). A widely respected veteran of state Capitol politics, Callahan was a former aide to Paul Simon and Alan Dixon, a couple of heavy hitters in your own party.

The values he espouses, or the lack of them, can be traced in the successes or failures of past governors.

It might, for instance, be worth your while to study "independent" Democrat Dan Walker's administration. In retrospect, his single-term fate likely was sealed within weeks of his swearing-in. Walker blew off the leaders of his own party, as students of Illinois politics know. In and of itself, that needn't have been a career-

killer. But Walker blew off everybody else at the Capitol, too, including — at the risk of seeming to whine — the media.

The short of it is, Walker's administration foundered because he seemed arrogant. He aimed his message at those he called "the people," while failing to develop good relations with the politicians and bureaucrats who can make things happen, or not happen, at the Capitol. At the same time, he seemed to cultivate bad relations with the messengers, those whose job it is to inform Illinois citizens about their government.

Dan Walker was the first Illinois governor to rely almost solely on a canned television strategy. That strategy was a winner in the short run; it was a loser in the long run.

There's another administration worth studying. Most everyone agrees Jim Thompson had a talent for the grand gesture. What is less noted is that he was a master at the small things.

Take, as an example, his relations with the media. One Statehouse reporter relays this about Thompson's first year in office. He was working on a story about campaign contributors getting highway construction contracts, and called the governor's press office to say that, at some point, he would like a comment from the governor. Five minutes later he turned to see Thompson standing in his office.

A second example will suffice. Once when Thompson was confronted by a large rally of angry union members, he responded by inviting them all to the governor's mansion for beer. There were at least hundreds, some swear thousands, and Thompson said he had to call his wife Jayne to tell her he was bringing some people home. They also had to bring in more beer. And porta-potties.

Thompson had a genuine political touch. Some say his style was mere symbolism, and probably much of it was. But, hey, he still holds the record as the longest-serving Illinois governor.

So welcome to our town. And don't be a stranger. □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at Peggyboy@aol.com.

Illinois Issues

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Credits: The photograph on this month's cover was taken by Terry Farmer.

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The burden of improving the death penalty system shifts to Rod Blagojevich

by Aaron Chambers

The death penalty reform torch passed from Gov. George Ryan to Gov.-elect Rod Blagojevich early last month during a joint appearance outside the executive suite in the state Capitol.

The two discussed capital punishment only for a moment. But during that time, Blagojevich, a Democrat, made clear, as he stood beside the Republican governor who turned reforming the system into something of a crusade, that he intends to follow that legacy.

The governor-elect's comments tracked the governor's standard stump speech on the issue, from his reference to the 13 men who were exonerated from Death Row while another 12 were executed to his use of the term "broken" to describe the system. "I believe there is no reason to rush on lifting the moratorium," Blagojevich said, referring to Ryan's three-year ban on executions.

The burden of improving a system under which defendants were wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death shifts to Blagojevich. Yet, he who declares the system broken has the burden of declaring it fixed. And that means setting a standard for reform, and seeing that it's met.

"When George Ryan put the moratorium in place and said, 'Let's fix it,' he gave us an enormous duty,"

He who declares the system broken has the burden of declaring it fixed. And that means setting a standard for reform, and seeing that it's met.

says Sen. Robert Molaro, a Chicago Democrat who co-chaired a legislative task force on reform. "Trying to get the right model, something where both chambers [of the legislature], as well as Rod Blagojevich, can actually come out and say, 'This is what I think will fix the problem with the death penalty,' is going to be very difficult to do. That's a pretty profound statement: 'We in Illinois have fixed the death penalty and how to impose capital punishment.'"

Blagojevich has stated he believes the death penalty is an appropriate punishment in certain cases. Should he wish to revive executions, he must preside over revisions in the capital punishment system sufficient to make

a declaration that it's been "fixed."

He has said he supports the moratorium on executions and believes certain reforms must be enacted before he will permit them. He has not said what those reforms might be, but he has mentioned a few areas where he sees the need for change. These include enlarging the state's trust fund used to offset capital litigation expenses, requiring that confessions in murder cases — but not interrogations — be videotaped, increasing funding for DNA testing and prohibiting the execution of somebody convicted solely on the testimony of a so-called jailhouse informant.

Blagojevich also has said he will not permit mentally retarded people to be executed. The U.S. Supreme Court last year ruled this practice unconstitutional. Thus, the state has no choice over whether to execute such people. Now, the state must provide a statutory definition for the condition.

Yet as Ryan's struggle illustrates, persuading the General Assembly to make fundamental changes to the death penalty statute is no easy task, particularly when those changes involve installing additional protections for defendants. Such votes can be construed on the campaign trail as being soft on crime. Similarly, lawmakers are reluctant to vote against legislation that is viewed as

getting tough on crime.

The debate, in large part, has pitted prosecutors, police and more-conservative lawmakers against proposals forwarded by Gov. Ryan's commission on the death penalty.

"I don't expect an overly large overhaul of the system because of the position of law enforcement," House Speaker Michael Madigan, a Chicago Democrat, told a public radio reporter last month. "There are many Democrats who are very interested in the position of law enforcement. So I'm not expecting real big-time change."

Consider the legislature's handling, during its fall veto session, of two measures related to the death penalty. Lawmakers embraced a bill that expands the scope of the death penalty — just the opposite of what reformers want to do — and forwarded "reform" legislation that would do little to change the handling of capital trials.

The first measure was aimed at expanding investigatory powers of law enforcement officials to fight terrorism. The most controversial provision: It makes murder in the course of terrorism punishable by death, creating the 21st death-eligibility factor. The governor objected to this point in particular, saying lawmakers should not expand the death penalty when he's trying to reform it. He vetoed the provision twice; during the November session, lawmakers overrode that veto, enacting the measure into law.

"It's almost impossible to vote against it because how do I go back to my district and say I voted against an anti-terrorism bill?" Molaro asks. "When you've got something that's called an anti-terrorism bill, does that mean if you vote against it you're pro-terrorism?"

The second measure lawmakers considered, which represented an effort to address concerns that have been raised about the system, centered on a provision that would expressly permit the Illinois Supreme Court to reduce to life in prison death sentences it deems "fundamentally unjust." Proponents called the bill, advanced by Senate Republicans and supported by prosecutors, a good first step toward repairing the system. But critics called that provi-

But Blagojevich will be operating in a legislative climate some believe will be more conducive to reform than during outgoing Gov. George Ryan's tenure.

sion meaningless because, they say, the court already has the authority to reduce a sentence that's fundamentally unfair. In addition, as State Appellate Defender Theodore Gottfried says, "The bill fails to include the great majority of reforms" forwarded by the governor's commission.

The Senate passed the bill and the governor pledged a veto should it pass the House on January 6 or 7, the last two days of the 92nd General Assembly. The House isn't likely to approve the measure, though. Madigan has called for deeper revisions and has been less than enthusiastic about the proposal. "There has to be more change than the Senate Republicans are prepared to do," he told the radio reporter. "I'm not certain where it will end, but the examination will continue through the next term of the General Assembly."

A new two-year session, the 93rd General Assembly, begins January 8.

The legislature has in recent years passed several measures geared to improve the administration of the ultimate punishment. They include the fund for capital litigation expenses (an effort to address inadequate funding for lawyers handling capital cases), a requirement that forensic evidence in some criminal cases be preserved until the defendant is executed and a requirement that all felons submit DNA samples to a statewide database.

The Illinois Supreme Court, meanwhile, changed its rules governing death penalty cases to require, for example, that most attorneys handling capital cases meet enumerated standards of experience.

But the legislature has not acted on proposals that would fundamentally

alter the administration of capital cases at the trial level — something that reform advocates say is necessary to fix the system. Lawmakers declined to act, for example, on recommendations forwarded last spring by the governor's commission. Several of the proposals are sweeping, such as a reduction in factors that together with murder make a defendant eligible for death and creation of a statewide panel to review a state's attorney's decision to seek death in a murder case.

But Blagojevich will be operating in a legislative climate some believe will be more conducive to reform than during Ryan's tenure. The key change in the new General Assembly: Republicans will no longer control the agenda in the Senate. That doesn't mean reform proposals will sail through the chamber once Democrats assume control this month, but it does mean that measures designed to overhaul the system will more likely get a vote. Under retiring Senate President James "Pete" Philip, a Wood Dale Republican, the Senate didn't schedule hearings on the most far-reaching proposals.

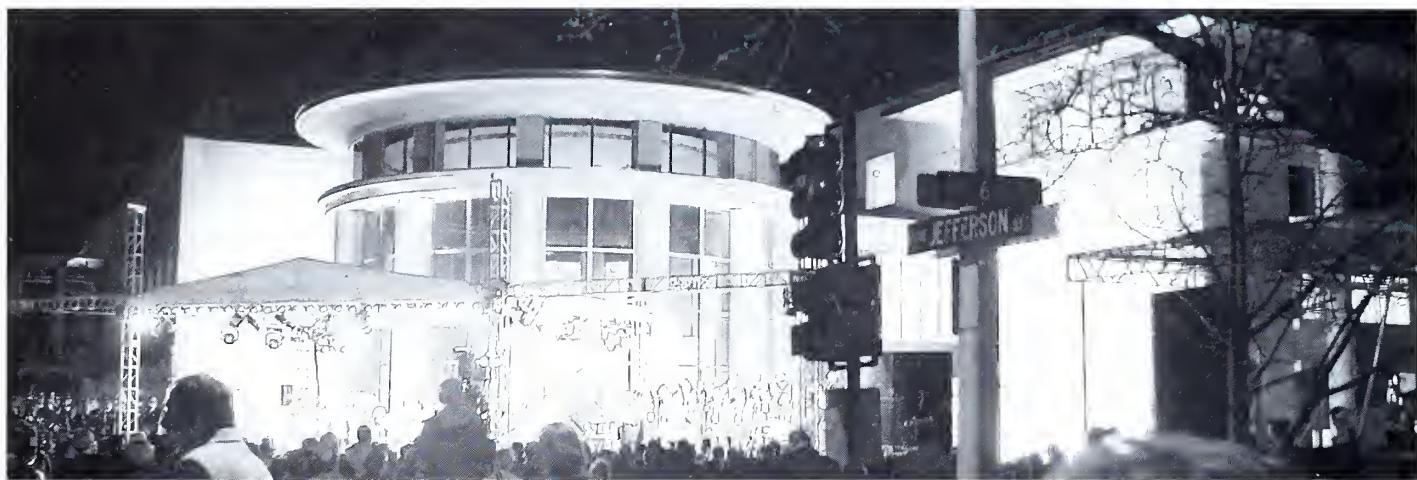
"We will vote on them, but we may find that the details of these reforms are very difficult to reach consensus on," says Sen. John Cullerton, a Chicago Democrat expected to chair the Senate Judiciary Committee once his party takes control of the chamber. "For example when you say let's videotape the confession and not the interrogations, there's a real practical question as to when the interrogation ends and the confession begins. And there's also the issue of cost."

The climate also could be altered if Gov. Ryan decides to commute to life in prison the sentences of any or all of the 160 inmates on Illinois' Death Row. Statutory changes generally are not retroactive and, as such, would not affect the cases of those already convicted and sentenced to death. Ryan could render this question moot by commuting the sentences. Doing so, though, could produce a backlash among lawmakers.

The burden now belongs to Blagojevich. □

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BRIEFLY



LINCOLN LIBRARY

Illinois pols dedicate building in a made-for-TV ceremony

There was a choir, an honor guard, a troupe of political dignitaries, a videotaped message from President George W. Bush and fireworks — all to dedicate the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, a facility that won't open for business until at least February. Still, amid the pomp and circumstance of the November 18 event, state officials made progress on one front.

Gov. George Ryan used the occasion to name the first four members of an 11-person advisory board for the library and museum complex. They are:

- Richard J. Franke, a retired business executive and the creator of the Chicago Humanities Festival;
- Garry Wills, an adjunct history professor at North-

western University whose *Lincoln at Gettysburg* won the 1993 Pulitzer Prize;

- Charles T. Cullen, a historian and the president of the Newberry Library in Chicago;
- Lonnie G. Bunch, a museum curator and the president of the Chicago Historical Society.

The appointees must meet state Senate approval. They will be compensated for their board-related expenses. Franke will serve as chair.

Meanwhile, according to Historic Preservation Agency spokesman David Blanchette, the library is now set to open on or near February 12 — Lincoln's birthday. The building will house the state's 12-million-piece historical library collection, which includes 46,000 Lincoln-related holdings. A museum, set to open in 2004, is being built next to the library.

The total cost of construction for both facilities is estimated at \$115 million (see *Illinois Issues*, November 2000, page 36; March 2001, page 17; and November 2002, page 8).

Rodd Whelpley

Quotable

“If you can’t make it in the real world, do something else.”

State Sen. James “Pete” Philip, a Wood Dale Republican, as quoted in The State Journal-Register of Springfield, responding to Gov. George Ryan’s suggestion that the state provide a loan to the financially ailing United Airlines. As for Ryan’s argument that 18,000 jobs are at stake, Philip reportedly had this to say: “I’m sorry about those people. It’s a terrible thing, but that’s life.”

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Sin taxes and job cuts

As a new administration takes on the task of governing, it may want to take note of a recent survey conducted by the University of Illinois at Springfield.

When asked about the state's fiscal situation, nearly half of Illinois adults surveyed said they support the idea of balancing the budget with a combination of spending cuts and increases in fees and taxes. Fewer than two in five, 38 percent, said they think government should first look at making spending cuts alone.

"Sin taxes," however, tops the list of a majority of respondents' solutions to the state budget shortfall. Eighty-four percent favor raising taxes on gambling, followed closely by 77 percent who favor raising taxes on liquor and 69 percent who want higher taxes on cigarettes. Yet three-fourths said they do not want to see state government impose a tax on services.

Nearly half support increases in the income tax on businesses and slightly more than half support increases in license fees and permits. However, large majorities oppose increases in taxes on utilities, gasoline and personal income.

To save money, 68 percent of Illinoisans said they favor making cuts in the size of the state's workforce. More than half would reduce incentives for businesses and would scale back on highway construction and repair.

However, a large majority of respondents oppose reducing the amount of reimbursements physicians and hospitals receive for treating senior citizens eligible for Medicare. Four out of five oppose spending cuts for public elementary and secondary schools. Three out of five oppose cuts for public universities. About the same number also oppose cuts in spending for law enforcement and prisons. More than half, 56 percent, also don't want to see farmers' benefits cut.

Illinoisans were divided, though, over whether the state should cut the amount of money spent on welfare programs: 47 percent approve; 49 percent oppose. The government should not, however, make cuts in programs "for the poor, sick and disabled," said 83 percent of those responding to the Survey Research Office's telephone interview.

The survey of 509 adults was conducted last fall. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

Beverley Scobell

Taxes and fees

To help balance the budget, do you think that taxes/fees should be raised a lot, raised a little or not raised at all?

	Raise a lot	Raise a little	Total raise	Do not raise*	Don't know/not applicable
Gambling taxes	56.6%	27.2%	83.8%	12.3%	3.9%
Taxes on alcoholic beverages	34.9	42.2	77.1	21.1	1.8
Cigarette taxes	47.7	20.8	68.5	30.1	1.3
License fees and permits	8.4	45.9	54.3	43.0	1.8
Income tax on businesses	8.9	40.7	49.6	45.6	4.8
Personal income taxes	3.5	20.8	24.3	73.9	1.7
Sales taxes	1.6	29.2	30.9	68.1	1.1
Taxes on utilities	0.9	13.9	14.8	84.0	1.2
Taxes on gasoline	4.5	14.5	18.9	80.4	0.7

*This percent includes a few respondents who indicated reducing or repealing the tax or fee.

Spending cuts

To balance the budget, do you think that spending on items/areas should be cut a lot, cut a little or not cut at all?

	Cut a lot	Cut a little	Total cut	Do not cut*	Don't know/not applicable
Number of state govt employees	23.0%	45.3%	68.2%	27.0%	4.8%
Tax incentives for businesses	14.4	43.3	57.7	38.0	4.3
Highway repairs and construction	11.0	43.2	54.1	43.5	2.3
Welfare programs	14.8	32.1	46.9	49.4	3.8
Public universities	4.7	31.6	36.3	59.9	3.8
Benefits for farmers	8.9	26.9	35.8	56.5	7.7
Law enforcement and prisons	8.9	25.1	34.1	61.4	4.5
Public elementary and high schools	2.6	15.0	17.7	81.1	1.2
Programs for the poor	3.0	11.9	14.9	82.9	2.2
Amount paid back to hospitals & doctors for senior citizen health care (Medicare)	3.5	11.0	14.5	83.0	2.6

*This percent includes a few respondents who indicated increasing spending for the item/area.



As the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency packs for the move to the new Lincoln library, it has rediscovered some treasures. This little girl's patriotic apron is one of the surprises. It was worn during the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates, which were grand affairs open to the public. The apron and other clothing, including garments designed by members of the political organization known as the Wide Awakes, formed to help Lincoln's election in 1860, will be on display in the museum. The pieces are good indications of the "nuknowu" roles women and children played in the politics of the day, says Kim Bauer, Lincoln curator for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Politics was an exclusive "man's field" in the 1800s, he says, and there is little research into the importance the family played in helping the male voter come to his political decision. "My feeling," says Bauer, "is that there was much political discussion between most husbands and wives before there was a decision on which candidate was to benefit from the vote."

Coming next month:

Illinois' business climate • Higher education spending • Abe Lincoln's birthday

Illinois Issues founding father steps down

Sam Gove, director emeritus of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, has been a behind-the-scenes player in state government and politics for half a century. During that time, a number of his ideas were implemented by public officials. Some of them changed Illinois politics forever.

One of those ideas remains a favorite of ours: a statewide public affairs magazine called *Illinois Issues*. Now, after spending 28 years helping to turn that idea into a reality, Sam Gove has decided to step down from the magazine's advisory board.

"Sam is like a living legend in regard to putting legislative history and public policies into perspective," says Taylor Pensoneau, president of the Illinois Coal Association and fellow board member.

Gove also helped professionalize the business of the Illinois General Assembly by launching a legislative internship program, which is now run by the U of I's Springfield campus. Over four decades, that program has provided a training ground for professional legislative support staff.

Many of those who worked as interns on legislative staffs have gone on to government careers. In 1990, *Illinois Issues* established the Samuel K. Gove Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Hall of Fame, which recognizes former interns who have served the state in an outstanding way. The most famous alumnus is former Gov. Jim Edgar, one of Gove's early interns.

"Sam has always been one academic person politicians felt they could work with," says Edgar. "He understood what was doable



Sam Gove (left) talks with former Republican Gov. Richard Ogilvie.



Former Gov. Jim Edgar appointed Sam Gove to his transition team.



As a political science professor at the University of Illinois, Sam Gove trained many of the men and women on the legislative staffs.

and what was not doable in the political world."

When Edgar, a Republican, was elected governor in 1990, he asked Gove to serve on his transition team. Gove also served on former Democratic Gov. Dan Walker's transition team. "We never met," says Gove, "but I got my picture in the Chicago papers. Walker relied more on his inner circle."

Gove, a native of Massachusetts, came to the University of Illinois after serving on a submarine chaser in World War II, then earning a master's degree in political science from Syracuse University. In the early 1950s, the university assigned him to work on the staff of the Illinois Commission to Study State Government, the state's so-called Little Hoover Commission. And, though he played no official role in forming the Constitutional Convention of 1970, Gove helped prepare papers that laid out the issues. He was director of the university's policy institute from 1967 to 1985, and he continues to keep office hours.

With his decades of experience in government, Gove has some advice for the new administration. "Two things, one obvious, the other less so," he says. "First and foremost is getting the state's finances back on track. We have to do that. And I hope they wouldn't avoid a tax increase at all costs. Second, I worry about the brain drain in state government because so many good people are taking early retirement. Many of those who have been keeping the agencies running are leaving. People like Ron Michaelson [head of the State Board of Elections] and others in middle management have been very important actors in getting the job done."

Beverley Scobell

Illinois GOP turns to new leadership

With her off-script comments and sometimes eccentric behavior, Illinois Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka may seem an unlikely candidate for figurehead of the Illinois Republican Party. But the state party is working to reinvent itself after years of weathering negative publicity surrounding such top GOP pols as retiring Gov. George Ryan, and after losing every statewide office in November but one — Topinka's.

So the state GOP thinks Topinka might be just the ticket to get her party back on track. She's moderate in her politics, and is popular among constituencies the GOP is courting (see *Illinois Issues*, March 1995, page 10). She can build coalitions, as is clear by her victory in a Democrat landslide year. She's energetic and hard-working; she's a constant presence on the road in her red van, her chief of staff Nancy Kimme at the wheel and her dogs Molly McDoo and Andrew in the back. As for her candid approach to issues and habit of wearing fuzzy slippers around the office, well, that's just part of her charm.

"To quote [the late Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley], 'Good politics is good government.' You do it every day," she says. "You do it on weekends, you do it at night. You do it when other people are not doing it. You do it because it's something you enjoy, it's the right thing to do, and the interaction between you and the public is a real healthy thing."

The Illinois Republican State Central Committee late last year elected Topinka to replace Gary MacDougal as chairman of the Illinois Republican Party. The former state lawmaker from suburban Riverside will begin her third four-year term as treasurer this month.

Her primary objective as party chair: To help President George W. Bush win Illinois in 2004. Bush lost the state to Al Gore in 2000, but Illinois is generally considered a bellwether state in presidential contests and he conceivably could win the state in his re-election bid.

"I'm in there basically to get the party organized and get a structure for George Bush to be able to run," she says. "I've got to get the president put together here because I really would like to see him win, and we need to get a party together and two years time is more than adequate."

Topinka could well transcend the party's traditional base. She's comfortable working in African-American and Hispanic communities — two traditionally Democratic areas — according to Sen. Kirk Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican and state central committeeman. She also helps the Republicans appeal to women and "Ronald Reagan white ethnic Democrats," he says.

"If our party is ever going to be in control," Dillard says, "then these are two areas where our party must do a better job of getting them to realize why they should be Republicans."

Aaron Chambers



Judy Baar Topinka

LegiAction

The General Assembly's fall session was marked more by what lawmakers didn't do than by what they did. There was plenty of drama, including 25 buses of union workers protesting feared cuts in services, and a retirement announcement by Senate President James "Pete" Philip. But legislators didn't deal with a growing budget deficit or outgoing Gov. George Ryan's proposed changes to the death penalty system.

Two days, January 6 and 7, remain of the General Assembly that ran through 2001 and 2002. But here are highlights of the November-December action.

Budget cuts Lawmakers didn't act on a supplemental appropriations bill that would have restored more than \$200 million in cuts made last year. The measure would reopen mental health and prison facilities, as well as restore some health care cuts.

School bailout The legislature passed, and Gov. George Ryan signed, two measures designed to rescue Hazel Crest School District 152½ from insolvency for at least the rest of this school year. The measures provide a state loan of up to \$4.5 million and establish a five-member authority to take over the district's operations.

Death penalty Lawmakers overrode Ryan's veto of an anti-terrorism measure aimed at expanding law enforcement investigative powers. The measure makes murder in the course of terrorism eligible for the death penalty. A separate measure approved by the Senate would permit the Illinois Supreme Court to reduce death sentences deemed "fundamentally unjust." It is not expected to be approved by the House. *Aaron Chambers*

Updates

- Illinois-based United Airlines filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and is expected to push for labor concessions in its efforts to restructure (see *Illinois Issues*, February 2002, page 24).
- Ellen Feinberg, a Champaign pediatrician who stabbed to death one of her sons, was found innocent by reason of insanity (see *Illinois Issues*, June 2002, page 23).
- Adkins Energy Cooperative opened the state's first farmer-owned ethanol plant near the northern Illinois town of Lena (see *Illinois Issues*, October 2001, page 9).

Booknote

Illinois Issues contributing editor Rodd Whelpley has written a novel that should make for entertaining reading before Illinois officials are sworn in. *Capital Murder*, issued by PublishAmerica, reveals the recesses of state politics as a Springfield police officer solves a decades-old crime. It's available at www.publishamerica.com.

LISA MADIGAN

Illinois' new attorney general joins national trend

Lisa Madigan plans to wear big shoes in the Illinois attorney general's office. After she's sworn in this month, she intends to stomp on securities fraud and inflated prescription drug prices, concerns that traditionally fall within the domain of the federal government.

Yet Illinois' new attorney general will have plenty of company in this endeavor. In recent years, state attorneys general throughout the country have been increasingly litigating in areas where the federal government has reduced its role or refused to take a role at all. Madigan is poised to join this trend toward state-level judicial activism.

"There certainly are areas right now — environmental being one and securities fraud being another — where on the federal level they are diminishing some of the protections available," Madigan says. "Therefore, I think it's going to fall to the states to do some work."

The states are doing just that. When the White House eased clean air regulations on older coal-fired plants in November, for instance, a group of Northeastern states, downwind from Midwestern plants, announced they would challenge the changes in court. The new rules allow utilities, refineries and manufacturers to avoid installing new anti-pollution equipment when they modernize their plants (see *Illinois Issues*, September, page 34), meaning the states could bear increased costs of air pollution.

Attorneys general in several states also are suing prescription drug companies over the rising cost of drugs. Those states charge that certain companies have illegally inflated drug costs.

Madigan, a Democrat, won't say whether she will join these actions, but she pledges to be active in both areas. With regard to the clean air provisions, she says, "Apparently what the Bush Administration wants

to do at this point is roll back the standards. Really you're looking at a situation where we're potentially saying let's gut some of the main provisions that people in the environmental community and those of us concerned with public health have been looking for."

As for rising prescription drug prices, her position during the campaign was that she would investigate and prosecute "illegal activities" by drug companies that keep prices high and lobby for legislation authorizing the state to use its purchasing power to negotiate them down.

Historically, attorneys general have tended toward national activism when the federal government is less active. The current trend can be traced to the 1980s, when officials in some states believed President Ronald Reagan's administration was not interested in protecting consumers or the environment.

The deregulatory-minded Bush Administration, and the new business-friendly Republican-controlled Congress, may give attorneys general even greater reason to advance a state-centered regulatory agenda in court.

"I believe that these decisions are best made by elected officials," says James Tierney, a former Democratic attorney general from Maine who teaches multistate litigation at Columbia Law School in New York. "But when there is no hope for consumer protection, environmental protections, etc., in elected forums, then attorneys general can and should act together to enforce the law and protect their states."

Activist attorneys general scored a huge victory in 1998 when a series of state lawsuits against tobacco



Lisa Madigan

companies resulted in a \$206 billion settlement for the states. In another extraordinary success, New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer last May negotiated a settlement with Merrill Lynch & Co. for \$100 million in penalties. The brokerage house also agreed to overhaul the way it monitors and pays stock

analysts. Spitzer claimed Merrill Lynch had published false and misleading stock recommendations. His investigation unveiled e-mails in which Merrill Lynch's analysts disparaged stocks of companies they were pushing clients to buy.

Madigan cites Spitzer's work as an example of the activism she hopes to emulate. She met Spitzer in New York last month to discuss his work. "You can see across the country examples of people who really have taken on the role of being the people's lawyer," she says. "I think right now Eliot Spitzer is the shining light of those individuals."

Madigan says investigation of securities fraud will be one of her priorities. She advances the theory that a 1996 federal law that rolled back investor protections, the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act, created a climate where financial irregularities flourished within such corporate giants as Enron Corp. and Global Crossing.

"While the federal government is talking about increased sanctions, we have to be using our investigators," Madigan says. "We have to be using our laws, and we should be putting in place rules that prevent conflicts of interest or have those conflicts disclosed when our state pension funds are actually going to be investing."

Aaron Chambers

Statewide elections in Illinois: A regional perspective

By John Ross and Richard Day,
Richard Day Research, for Illinois Issues

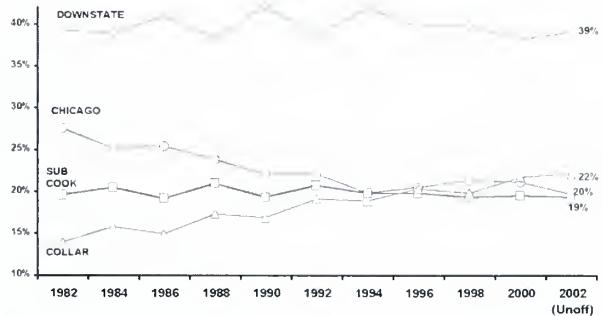
A key way to understand Illinois statewide election results is to break the state down into its disparate regions. Illinois can be divided into four regions for this purpose: the city of Chicago, suburban Cook County, the collar counties of Chicago (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will) and downstate.

Chart 1, which shows how the regional composition of the vote has changed over time, contains three points of note:

- For the past 20 years, the Chicago media market (Chicago, suburban Cook County and the collar counties) has consistently made up about 60 percent of the statewide vote.
- Chicago itself continues to provide less of the statewide vote. Democrats used to count on more than 25 percent of a statewide vote coming from the city — a vote heavily in their favor. However, in the last election, the Chicago contribution slipped to 20 percent, and without Gov.-elect Rod Blagojevich's and House Speaker Michael Madigan's city organizations, it's not unreasonable to assume that Chicago would have dropped to 17 percent of the statewide total.
- The collar counties continue to make up an increasingly larger share of the vote. In 2002, they made up 22 percent of the vote, and now contribute more than either Chicago or suburban Cook County.

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Chart 1:
% of Total Illinois General Election Ballots Cast by Region



Additionally, there is a political shift going on within the collar counties. Traditionally, Republican statewide candidates have relied on dominating this part of the state to offset the Democratic vote coming out of the city of Chicago.

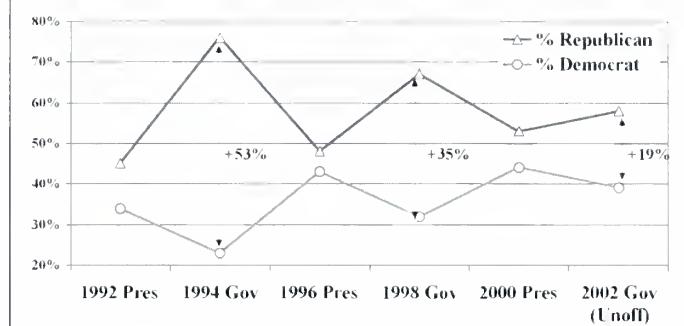
However, as Chart 2 indicates, recent trends show that this is becoming more difficult. In the last two presidential elections, the Democrat did reasonably well. In gubernatorial years, the gap between the Republican and the Democrat has closed considerably. Note the variation in the vote for governor in 1994 compared to 2002. This year, Blagojevich drew 39 percent, compared to less than 25 percent for

Democrat Dawn Clark Netsch in 1994. (Democrat Lisa Madigan drew a more traditional 35 percent of the vote against Republican Joe Birkett in the attorney general race.)

When thinking about the collar counties, it is useful to see Will and Lake as one group and Kane, McHenry and DuPage as another. The former has a greater disposition to split their tickets while the latter three are more solidly Republican.

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Chart 2:
% Choosing Republican and Democratic Candidates over Time (Collar Counties only)



The most interesting is Lake County, which recorded the single biggest drop in Republican support between 1998 and 2002.

We offer two reasons for this. With the scandals that plagued Gov. George Ryan's administration, and no Republicans challenging his conduct until it was too late, there was a general disgust with the Republican leadership. "Honesty in government" is particularly important in this area.

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Table 1: % Republican Vote 1994-2002: Individual Collar Counties

	1994 Gov. % for Repub. (Edgar)	1998 Gov. % for Repub. (G.Ryan)	2000 Pres. % for Repub. (Bush)	2002 Gov. % for Repub. (J. Ryan)	2002 Att.Gen. % for Repub. (Birkett)
DuPage	78%	70%	55%	64%	66%
Kane	75%	65%	54%	58%	62%
Lake	74%	67%	50%	53%	56%
McHenry	76%	72%	59%	60%	64%
Will	73%	58%	50%	53%	60%

Voters there also tend to fit the quintessential suburban profile of people raising families, concerned about schools and other public services, trying to balance the demands of work and family, and high taxes amidst sprawl and traffic congestion. Blagojevich's and Madigan's campaigns held some appeal to segments of these more affluent collar county voters, especially Blagojevich's message on education. These are people with a Republican predisposition who can easily vote for the candidate of another party.

With the collar counties becoming more of a player in statewide elections, it will be imperative for future candidates to seize issues that resonate with those voters. □

Pressbox

Layoffs, leases and pensions

The State Journal-Register of Springfield has reported that a St. Clair County judge postponed layoffs of nearly 1,000 state workers after incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich asked for a delay. In its December 7 edition, the newspaper wrote that most of those employees would have been out of a job as the middle of this month.

Blagojevich asked in a letter that an injunction against the layoffs be extended until after he takes office. He'll be sworn in January 13.

Judge Alexis Otis-Lewis granted a 90-day extension, which will keep prison, mental health and children and family services workers on the job for now.

The layoffs were part of last spring's budget cuts.

The ruling was issued in a suit filed by the American Federation of

State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31 representing state workers.

The Chicago Tribune has reported that outgoing Attorney General Jim Ryan called for more information about buildings the state wants to purchase for \$1 million or more each at the tail end of outgoing Gov. George Ryan's administration.

Jim Ryan's move could slow and possibly halt those purchases.

The newspaper wrote in its November 21 edition that former state Sen. Arthur "Ron" Swanson, a friend of George Ryan, was attempting to broker a deal on Lincoln Towers, an office and apartment complex across from the Capitol.

A glass house designed by Mies van der Rohe in Kendall County also was among the potential buys (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2001, page 28).

The Chicago Sun-Times has reported that retiring state Sen. President James "Pete" Philip will receive more in pension income a year after he leaves office than what he gets now in his legislative paycheck.

In its December 6 edition, the newspaper wrote that Philip, a Republican from Wood Dale, is now paid \$81,007 per year. In 2003, according to the paper, he'll begin drawing pension income of nearly \$69,000. But in 2004, his annual pension income will rise to nearly \$100,000. Every year after that, he'll get an automatic 3 percent cost-of-living increase.

Philip, who at 72 has served in the General Assembly since 1967, announced last month his plans to retire from the legislature. The decision came after Republicans lost the Senate to the Democrats.

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Stay curious

Correction

Illinois Issues' editorial team has always been grateful to our intelligent and well-informed subscribers. No more so than when readers take the time to help us correct errors.

One sharp-eyed reader has pointed out, rightfully, that we should have referred to the Augean stables in our December issue, not the Aegean stables. Of course, when Hercules helped King Augeas clean up after his oxen, he wasn't laboring under the sea.

This copy-editing goof was our own, and not the writer's.

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Executive decisions

Rod Blagojevich won his race for governor handily. Now he has primary responsibility for eliminating the state's red ink. The fiscal and political bills are about to come due

by Aaron Chambers

Rod Blagojevich spent last year promising pretty much everything to everybody. So when he's sworn in this month as Illinois' chief executive, there's no doubt the occasion will be marked by a massive celebration.

But the mood is likely to turn sour all too soon. Over the next 18 months, the new Democratic governor will face a hole in the state budget that's been pegged by some at more than \$3 billion because anticipated revenues aren't covering anticipated spending. Blagojevich, who won election handily, now has primary responsibility for eliminating that red ink.

The fiscal and political bills are about to come due.

"There are only three options that I can see," says state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, the only Republican constitutional officer. "You raise taxes, you make severe cuts or you do a combination of both."

Those options didn't make it into Blagojevich's campaign brochures. He ruled out tax hikes, but not spending reductions. In fact, he promised to reopen several state facilities that were closed last spring as part of a cost-saving move. He also called for additional spending in such programs as prescription drug coverage for seniors. To accomplish these goals he said he will "reprioritize" state spending.



Rod Blagojevich

Photograph by Randy Squires

In the weeks since the election, the new administration has shared few details about its plans.

Blagojevich has, however, formed a committee to study the state's budget situation and assist him with shaping a budget. Revenue considerations on the table include extending the state sales tax to cover such services as haircuts and auto repair, as well as short-term borrowing. Cost-saving possibilities include trimming boards and commissions, releasing nonviolent offenders from prison, delaying the state's bill-paying cycle and not filling thousands of state jobs vacated by those taking early retirement.

As for spending, the Blagojevich team is playing just as close to the vest. The *Chicago Tribune* pegged Blagojevich's campaign spending proposals at \$805,027,056, citing as its sources media reports, Blagojevich's Web site and *Tribune* questionnaires. But Billy Weinberg, Blagojevich's press secretary, calls the *Tribune* estimate inflated.

"I hope that the Tribune Co. uses different accountants for the company than they do for the editorial page," Weinberg said shortly after the election. "Otherwise, they're going to end up paying Dusty Baker triple what they intend to." He was referring to the new manager of the Chicago Cubs, which the Tribune Co. owns.

Beyond that, Blagojevich hasn't played his hand and is not required to do so until February 19, when he must submit his first proposed budget to the General Assembly. He and the nation's other governors, many of whom face the same fiscal problems, don't have the kind of leeway granted federal budgeteers. Virtually all states are required to balance their budgets.



Weinberg also e-mailed to *Illinois Issues* a statement contending the *Tribune* had double- and in some cases triple-counted key elements of Blagojevich's spending plan. He cited Blagojevich's education proposal. The newspaper, Weinberg says, estimated the total at \$315 million, then counted some components of that proposal separately, including an early childhood development plan, estimated at \$100 million, and a plan to award scholarships to students planning to teach, estimated at \$45 million.

The statement also contended estimated costs associated with expanding the state's prescription drug program should take into account "savings" incurred when seniors don't require as much in-patient care because they will have adequate preventive medicine.

The statement did not address any of Blagojevich's other proposed spending, such as reopening the Sheridan Correctional Center and the Lincoln Developmental Center. It also did not include an estimated spending total.

It did, however, suggest that any accounting of spending proposals should coincide with a list of additional state revenues that would flow from Blagojevich's economic development plan and such proposals as eliminating state subsidies to the horse racing

industry. Last year, the industry received more than \$25 million in subsidies and tax breaks.

Blagojevich has hinted that certain areas of spending are headed for the chopping block, though. He said during the campaign that the state Department of Commerce and Community Affairs and the Illinois State Board of Education would be good places to cut bureaucracy. He said he would eliminate legislative member initiatives, projects designated for home districts that have directed state funding to everything from local firetrucks to bike paths for community parks. He also formed a committee to study the governor's 400 or so boards and commissions that cost the state at least \$6.9 million a year. He hinted there could be plenty to cut there.

The budget crunch stems in part from a slumping national economy, which was exacerbated by the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001. But analysts see problems on both sides of the ledger. Clearly, Illinois isn't the only state facing an eroding bottom line. A survey conducted in November by the National Conference of State Legislatures found that more than half of the states are facing gaps in their fiscal year 2003 budgets. Revenues have

not met projected levels in two-thirds of the reporting states, the survey found, while expenditures have exceeded budgeted levels in more than half of those states.

A similar study by the National Governor's Association concluded that plunging tax revenues combined with soaring health care costs have created the worst fiscal situation for the states since World War II. As in Illinois, income tax revenues have plummeted across the nation during the last two years, while Medicaid spending has soared.

Some Illinoisans also maintain the deficit is due to this state's failure to prepare for an economic slowdown during the early years of Gov. George Ryan's administration.

"Medicaid and the income tax are both just subsets of our overall revenue and expenditure problems," says Illinois Comptroller Daniel Hynes. "If you go back four years, you will see that the state allowed itself to spend excessively during healthier economic times. We saw major increases in spending across the board, both in our general funds and overall budget."

Everyone can agree that spending is going up. The current \$52.6 billion budget, Ryan's last, is \$14 billion more than former Gov. Jim Edgar's last

Promises, promises

During his campaign for governor, Rod Blagojevich promised a range of new spending. Costs have been estimated to total as much as \$805 million. Blagojevich's press secretary called that figure inflated but would not provide a detailed accounting in rebuttal. Following are basic details of major proposals together with estimated costs. The estimates were culled from state agencies, Blagojevich position papers and statements, and news clips.

Education The governor-elect's plan would cost an estimated \$315.5 million. Components of this include a \$100 million early childhood development program, a \$45 million program to attract future teachers with university scholarships, \$10 million in teacher signing bonuses and \$10 million to double the number of highly qualified master teachers.

State facilities Blagojevich has pledged to reopen Lincoln Developmental Center at a cost in excess of \$30 million, Sheridan Correctional Center in LaSalle County

(\$32.3 million), Zeller Mental Health Center in Peoria (\$5.7 million), Paris Work Camp (\$5.5 million) and Greene County Work Camp (\$5 million). With regard to correctional facilities, Department of Corrections spokesman Brian Fairchild says, "There may be additional costs associated with reopening facilities. You must remember these are ballpark figures." In the next fiscal year, he says, operating costs will be up "at least 4 to 5 percent."

Health care Blagojevich's plan to expand Family Care to cover 200,000 families is estimated to cost \$60 million, while his prescription drug plan is estimated at \$59 million. He has suggested some \$20 million in tobacco control and prevention programs.

Law enforcement The governor-elect has pledged to hire 1,000 more police officers and upgrade equipment at an estimated cost of \$35 million. He also promised to double the number of parole officers, which would cost an estimated \$27 million.

Aaron Chambers

budget four years ago. General funds appropriations, generated mostly from sales taxes, income taxes and federal aid, grew \$2.4 billion from \$19.9 billion to \$22.3 billion.

Hynes suggests that some of that spending was excessive. Does the creation of a dedicated fund for legislative member initiatives qualify? He says yes. Called the Fund for Illinois' Future, it was enacted in 1999 along with Illinois First, Ryan's \$12 billion public works program. During that year and the following two years, \$560 million was transferred from the general revenue fund to the member initiative fund.

"There was over \$500 million drained from the general revenue fund for the Fund for Illinois' Future to pay for these projects," Hynes says. "That is money that many of us wish we still had."

The general funds umbrella includes the general revenue fund, the state's main checking account, and some education dollars. The remainder of the budget consists mostly of state and federal funds dedicated for such projects as road construction. As it would be more difficult to raid these funds for general use, Blagojevich is expected to focus adjustments within the general funds.

The bulk of the current fiscal year's

\$22.3 billion in general funds appropriations is dedicated to education, health care and public aid. Certain moneys, such as those associated with Medicaid, can't be cut without losing dollar-for-dollar matching grants from the federal government. In budgetary terms, this generally means they're non-discretionary. But whether these and other funds are discretionary is relative.

"You really need to define what discretionary is," says state Budget Director Mike Colsch. "For example, you could argue that certain components of Medicaid are discretionary, but others would argue that services and rates have been pared back as far as they should be pared back. Is education discretionary? Legally, yes. But practically, as a place where you could get large budgetary reductions, I doubt it.

"Once people realize that education, Medicaid and human services make up more than 80 percent of the state budget, then they start realizing that the areas where you can practically make reductions, as opposed to legally, are limited."

The dynamics also are complicated for legislators, who represent varied constituencies around the state. While the governor takes the lead on the budget in Illinois, he still must win approval by both chambers of the legislature.

"Everyone in the General Assembly, all 177 of us, have our own programs that may be precious to us," says Rep. Art Tenhouse, a Liberty Republican and chief budget negotiator for the House Republican caucus. "For a rural legislator it may be agriculture or the Department of Natural Resources. For someone from the city it may be public aid or human services. What we consider discretionary and nondiscretionary is different for all 177 of us. And to try to pass a budget that makes these kinds of [presumed] cuts, putting 60 votes on it in the House and 30 in the Senate, is going to be a monumental task."

While Blagojevich considers ways to craft a balanced budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1, he must also balance the budget that ends June 30. Taken together, that hole could approach \$4 billion.

According to a budget advisory committee of Chicago Metropolis 2020, a group dedicated to promoting economic growth in the metropolitan region, the shortfall for fiscal year 2003 could reach almost \$750 million while the hole in the fiscal year 2004 budget may reach \$2.6 billion. That's a combined figure of more than \$3.3 billion.

Hynes estimates the combined budget shortfall could be as much as \$3.8 billion if current trends continue.

Topinka, the state treasurer, says it could be as high as \$4 billion. "The numbers vary but I want to play worst case scenario," she says.

The 11-member Metropolis 2020 advisory committee, packed with former state and city budget directors, based its conclusions on data provided by the governor's Bureau of the Budget, the legislature's Economic and Fiscal Commission, state agencies and other sources. The study was requested during last year's campaign by both major gubernatorial candidates.

"What you see here reflects the best judgment of this group of people who were budget directors themselves," says George Ranney, president and chief executive officer of Metropolis 2020. "But it's all their review of what was provided by the various state agencies."

The advisory committee noted that while Illinois' budget problem is significant, it is proportionally less severe than shortfalls in New York and California. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures report, New York is facing a \$2.5 billion gap in fiscal year 2003, or 6.3 percent of its general funds, while California's gap is \$6.1 billion, or 7.8 percent. The projected \$750 million gap for the current fiscal year in Illinois is 3 percent of general funds.

The committee projects that revenues in this fiscal year will be down \$387 million due to lagging income and sales tax revenues, and that spending pressures will exceed the budget by \$379 million due mostly to the needs of Medicaid, state employees group health insurance and the Illinois Department of Corrections. The committee emphasizes that more than \$200 million of this additional spending is due to health care costs.

With regard to fiscal year 2004, the committee expects that revenues will

decline to \$23.7 billion from projected revenues of \$24 billion in this fiscal year. This would mean two consecutive years of negative revenue growth — an unprecedented scenario for Illinois. As the committee anticipates \$26.3 billion in expenditures for the next fiscal year, the budget shortfall would be \$2.6 billion.

Though Ranney stresses that the committee was charged with analyzing the budget, not solving the budget gap, it did propose a few solutions. For example, the committee says the state could save \$61 million by filling only 25 percent of the positions vacated due to

for example, how much the prison population will grow and budgeting to cover those costs," the committee's report says. "The budget does not focus attention on how to intervene to decrease crime so that the prison population stops growing. Similarly, the budget projects the need for transportation funds, assuming that the state continues to grow as it has in the past; yet state spending can encourage the state to grow differently, saving transportation and other resources in the long run."

Of course, thinking in the long term presents an additional challenge for budgeteers, who will be focused first and foremost on simply pulling the state out of the red.

Yet Hynes, who has trumpeted long-term fiscal planning during his tenure, says he's optimistic that lawmakers this year will plan for the future. "I think that these experiences the last two years, that have not been pleasant for anyone, are going to cause all of us to reflect on what might be wrong with our system and make some changes that will make everyone's lives easier," he says.

The quandary facing Blagojevich does evoke images of former Gov. Jim Edgar working to fill the budget hole he inherited in 1991. When he took office that January, Edgar's transition team was forecasting a \$1 billion deficit. Over the spring, as a recession kicked in, the projected hole grew another \$200 million.

But Edgar managed to secure a budget by holding the line on spending. He also kept lawmakers in Springfield 19

days after the scheduled end of session. "[Blagojevich] will probably have to go back to a lot of people that he promised things to and just say, 'I can't do it,'" Edgar says. "There's just no way that you can even keep the status quo with those kinds of numbers. You've got to really go in and make some major changes."

Blagojevich's budget solution,



Outgoing Gov. George Ryan (left) and incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich met with the press after holding a private talk during the legislature's fall session.

the early retirement program passed last year.

The committee did not account for Blagojevich's spending proposals. But it did encourage him to design a budget that's geared to prevent, in the long term, the problems that spending is targeted to address. "Currently, spending projections are based on estimating,

inevitably, will disappoint not-yet-identified special interests. Still, Rep. Gary Hannig, a Litchfield Democrat and chief budget negotiator for the House Democratic caucus, notes that's nothing new.

"We always have trouble with the budget, and you've even got trouble with the budget in good years," he says. "Even in the best of years we've got

about \$75 billion worth of needs and wants that we've got to squeeze into a \$50 billion budget, and it's just not easy to do."

"Even in the good years of George Ryan, where we had \$1.5 billion or \$1.6 billion in [revenue] growth, we never walked out [of the Capitol] at the end of session with people and groups happy with the spending levels. They

always felt we should have gone higher or given them greater consideration. It's just very difficult to please the special interest groups that wander around the building seeking out taxpayers' dollars."

If the special interest groups aren't disappointed this year, they certainly will be surprised. □

Help wanted

The new governor's first challenge will be to find people who can make him look good

by Doug Finke

Former Gov. Jim Edgar knows first-hand the problems facing incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

It's not so much the gaping budget deficit staring at Blagojevich, a situation that mirrors what Edgar faced when he took office 12 years ago. Rather, it's finding qualified people to fill key government posts — people who will determine how well a new governor deals with the budget and myriad other problems facing the state.

"As governor, you are only as good as the people around you," Edgar says.

Like any incoming governor, Blagojevich faces the daunting task of finding people who will make him look good. But the personnel challenges facing Blagojevich may well be bigger than those that faced any other Illinois governor.

Anti-patronage court rulings now limit hirings and firings for political reasons. An early retirement program is



Rod Blagojevich will be the first Democratic governor since Dan Walker was defeated after serving a single term in the mid-1970s.

draining the state of its professional managers. And, after a 26-year absence from the Executive Mansion, Democrats have a limited pool of loyalists with state government experience who can be tapped to fill those jobs.

Blagojevich isn't the first governor who will have to deal with fallout from *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*, the landmark anti-patronage lawsuit filed by Springfield attorney Mary Lee

Leahy. He is, however, the first Democrat to deal with the U.S. Supreme Court's 1990 ruling in the case.

Named for state worker Cynthia Rutan, the decision limits the role political considerations can play in hiring, firing, promoting and granting raises in state government. Leahy is a member of Blagojevich's transition team, a position that should be invaluable to the incoming governor.

"Leahy will help Rod put all of the people he legally can into certain spots," says Sen. Kirk

Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican who helped Edgar assemble his staff.

Ironically, another member of the Blagojevich transition team is former Gov. James Thompson, one of the people Leahy sued as part of the *Rutan* case.

Under *Rutan*, politics can play a role when hiring for policymaking positions. Of the roughly 61,000 jobs under the governor's control, about 3,100

have been identified as policy-making positions that should not be protected by the *Rutan* anti-patronage decision. In state parlance, those jobs are called *Rutan*-exempt.

However, 2,600 of those *Rutan*-exempt jobs also are protected by the state's personnel code. That means people can be hired because of their political loyalties, but Blagojevich can't fire them unless the state can show they are unfit. Even Leahy thinks that having 2,600 *Rutan*-exempt jobs protected under the personnel code may be too restrictive.

"The incoming governor should be given more latitude," she says.

While some policymaking positions may still be occupied by Republicans after Blagojevich takes over, the state's managerial ranks may be devastated. Lawmakers last spring passed an early retirement incentive program to lure higher paid state employees into leaving their jobs. It allows state workers to purchase additional years of service credits, which means they can collect higher pensions at a younger age.

Legislators viewed the program as a budget issue, another piece in a plan to cut state spending. But as it is set up, the plan only makes financial sense to people who have long years of state service.

The effect is to empty state agencies of their most experienced people. About 21,000 state workers were thought to meet the minimum age and seniority requirements to participate in the early retirement program. Officially, the state estimates 9,000 of those workers will retire, though some, such as state Sen. Larry Bomke, a Springfield Republican and the plan's author, think 10,000 or more workers will leave.

Many of these people are the professional managers who keep state government operating from day to day. Even though most of them were hired during previous Republican administrations, their knowledge of government's nuts and bolts would have made them valuable to an incoming administration.

"Blagojevich has a huge disadvan-



tage in that he will lose a lot of talent," says Dillard. Unlike a retirement incentive program in the early 1990s, the current plan does not allow most early retirees to return to work in a permanent position for the state, even as independent contractors. That means the state cannot tap into retirees' expertise after they are gone. There is an exception that allows the state to extend the December 31 retirement deadline for workers deemed to hold key positions that must be kept filled with experienced people. In those cases, the workers can stay on board until April. Ray Serati, a spokesman for outgoing Gov. George Ryan, says the Ryan Administration is not keeping a running tally of requests for extensions. However, he concedes, "A majority have been turned down."

This all adds up to a serious brain drain for state government, one that must be solved by Blagojevich. And this is where the Democrats' absence from the governor's office for the last 26 years could be keenly felt.

"The Democrats don't have the experience," Edgar says. "It's not that they don't have the talent; they don't have the experience. They have to replace a lot more than they want to replace, many of them at the higher level where they haven't been."

This doesn't mean the Democrats have no people with government experience. There are many Democrats with government experience in Chicago and Cook County. And Secretary of State Jesse White and Comptroller Dan Hynes, both Democrats, have been in power four years and have experienced

people who could make the jump to the Blagojevich Administration.

Not everyone thinks Blagojevich faces a shallow talent pool. Al Lerner, chief executive officer for the Illinois State Medical Society, was chairman of Edgar's cabinet search team.

"My sense is the Blagojevich Administration will have more than enough people to choose from," Lerner says. "They will come from government, but the private sector as well. One thing that surprised me [in 1990] was the interest of the private sector in wanting to be involved. People will say 'This is an opportunity to enhance my experience.'"

Dillard says Blagojevich would do well to locate a professional headhunter who will volunteer his services to the transition team, something Edgar did when taking office.

"We found some excellent people from the headhunter," he says, citing Natural Resources Director Brent Manning, former Department of Commerce and Community Affairs Director Jan Grayson and former Lottery Director Desiree Rogers.

Blagojevich must deal with all of these problems without the benefit of having been actively involved in state government for the past six years while serving in Congress. Whether this hinders his ability to fill key jobs remains to be seen.

Edgar had an extensive background in state government before he was elected governor — as a legislator, as a member of the governor's staff and as secretary of state. He says that background helped, but only up to a point.

"All of that paled compared to being governor," Edgar says. "The step up was monumental. I don't think anyone is prepared to be governor." □

Doug Finke is a Statehouse reporter for the State Journal-Register of Springfield and Copley Illinois Newspapers.

The 93rd unpacks its agenda

In the new General Assembly, no storyline is likely to be as compelling as the battle shaping up between unions and business interests

by Dave McKinney



Illinois' political cosmos was aligned to enable Democrats to seize the House, the Senate and the Executive Mansion for the first time since Dan Walker was governor in the 1970s. That's generally considered to be good news for this state's organized workers. And the new General Assembly's freshman class does appear poised to transform the Statehouse into a union-friendly domain.

For the first time in a decade, there

will be new legislative leaders among the "Four Tops": Chicagoan Emil Jones will be Senate president; Frank Watson of Greenville will be Senate GOP leader; and Tom Cross of Oswego will be House GOP leader. Thirty-two new lawmakers will be seated this month and eight others will move from one legislative chamber to the other. The Senate will have its first independent in 88 years. Sen. James Meeks of Chicago.

Keeping everyone's names and positions straight will be a chore until May. But among the immediately recognizable realities of Springfield's new political landscape are the initials that will come after most of the newcomers' last names — "D" for Democrat — and two sets of all-important numbers: 33-26 and 66-52. Those are the margins by which the Democrats control the Senate and the House, respectively, and the votes that

might arise in roll call after roll call as organized labor flexes its newfound legislative muscle.

In the 93rd General Assembly, no storyline is likely to be as compelling or life-altering as the battle shaping up between unions and business interests. Last fall, organized labor registered thousands of new Democratic voters and pumped millions of dollars into the campaign funds of top party lawmakers and the state's new pro-union governor, Rod Blagojevich.

Now, they want Democrats at the Capitol to deliver on campaign promises by hiking the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour, ensuring equal pay for men and women who perform the

same jobs, providing paid family leave benefits for the first time in Illinois, restructuring workers' compensation and rescuing the financially imperiled unemployment insurance trust fund.

And those are just a few of organized labor's priorities that never would have made it out of the one-time GOP killing ground, the Senate Rules Committee.

"I do recognize in the Senate that labor has been shut out, and I intend to bring them back in," pledges newly elevated Senate President Jones, the second African American to head his chamber and one of labor's biggest legislative allies.

More complicated are demands

from state workers' largest union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 31. They want the Democrats to reverse some of former Gov. George Ryan's budget cuts that mothballed state prisons, work camps, mental health institutions and other state facilities.

Blagojevich promised to do that. But it could mean lawmakers would have to raise taxes. Before Ryan left office, his budget forecasters predicted a deficit of as much as \$2.5 billion in the fiscal year that begins July 1. Undoing Ryan's facilities closures could deepen that hole by more than \$800 million.

Those are some of the decisions that come with the Democrats' successful

Other issues confronting the 93rd General Assembly

Budget The new cast of lawmakers is staring at a possible budget hole of \$2.5 billion by July, according to forecasts made by former Gov. George Ryan's budget office. Rising Medicaid costs and health insurance for state employees and retirees, combined with a drastic fall in revenues mean either more severe budget cutbacks or an increase in taxes, an option newly elevated Senate President Emil Jones opposes.

Death penalty Deposed Senate Republicans were loathe to embrace many of the dozens of reforms recommended by a blue-ribbon panel former Gov. George Ryan appointed to study faults in the state's death penalty system. Key opponents to the death penalty intend to press new lawmakers to enact many of the recommendations, including narrowing the number of death penalty-eligible crimes, requiring videotaped confessions and interrogations and barring the imposition of a death sentence when someone is convicted on one person's testimony without physical evidence.

Airports With efforts to expand Chicago's O'Hare Airport stalled in Congress, backers of Mayor Richard Daley's aviation blueprint have signaled they intend to switch their sights to Springfield, where Chicagoans lead both legislative chambers and occupy the Executive Mansion. Possible legislation would authorize the project and limit a governor's ability to veto new runways.

School funding An advisory group has recommended hiking the "foundation level" of state-subsidized per pupil spending on public school students. That level is



efforts in November at ending the GOP's 10-year grip on the Senate and padding its lead over Republicans in the House. While union leaders have put together a full menu, they say they don't intend to gorge themselves. After all, history has shown that gobbling too much at once in the legislature can lead to a bad case of political heartburn.

Just ask Rep. Lee Daniels of Elmhurst, who stepped down as House GOP leader in October amid a federal probe into alleged misuse of legislative staffers on political campaigns. Even before that fall from power, Daniels lost his two-year post as House speaker during the mid-1990s after Republicans controlling the legislature and

governor's office rammed through lawsuit caps, threatened to ban political donations from unions and make Illinois a right-to-work state, and repealed a law designed to enable injured workers to seek additional financial remedies. Unions were energized and helped return the speaker's gavel to Chicago Democrat Michael Madigan in early 1997.

"I think this is a great opportunity for us," says Margaret Blackshire, president of the million-member Illinois AFL-CIO and a co-chair of Blagojevich's transition team. "What we have to be careful of is sensitivity and not being greedy. When Republicans took over in '94, they did everything

they could to hurt us. We were able to use that to take back the House two years later. We won't give them the ability to do that to us. We'll be cautious, persistent, and we won't seek to punish the business community."

From his newfound perch of power, Jones promises not to gore business and says he favors an "agreed bill process," by which unions and businesses will sit down together and negotiate legislation before it's sent to Blagojevich. "I don't think labor is expecting to come in and grab and get everything they want. I don't believe they can," Jones says. "Business shouldn't have anything to worry about."

Business groups, such as the

currently \$4,560. Budget constraints kept Gov. Ryan during his last year in office from doing that. In addition, Gov.-elect Rod Blagojevich indicated during the campaign his desire to pass legislation that would put into state law a requirement that 51 percent of new state revenues be dedicated each year to education. Ryan followed that dictate voluntarily.

Tollways The outgoing Republican chairman of the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority repeatedly called for toll increases to keep the sprawling road network in Chicago's suburbs free of potholes, but Ryan blocked that from happening. Blagojevich, who also opposes toll hikes, has embraced a proposal to give greater legislative oversight over the tollway's finances.

Gambling The casino industry wants the legislature to approve lower taxes and expand the number of slot machines and gaming tables authorized at each casino. Mayor Daley also supports a new state gambling license for Chicago, a move that would have to be authorized by state lawmakers. Blagojevich has said he opposes expanded gaming positions and the creation of a new license for the city.

Gay rights As recently as last spring, backers of legislation to guarantee gays and lesbians safeguards against discrimination in the workplace and in housing passed the Illinois House but never made it out of the GOP-led Senate Rules Committee. With Democrats controlling the Senate, expect another run at this contentious issue.

Dave McKinney



GOP-leaning Illinois Manufacturers' Association, hope Jones and Blackshire are good on their word. Effectively helpless to stop labor's political dictates, IMA President Greg Baise says his group's best line of defense against the possible legislative onslaught by unions comes down to these words: "Really, prayer."

Baise says it's incumbent upon Democrats to balance labor's wish list against the possible damage that could be done to the state's business community, which is still reeling from the effects of recession.

"In 2002, manufacturing employment fell below 900,000 employees for the first time since records were kept in

World War II. The message from that is that manufacturers aren't expanding in Illinois. They're looking for other places to do business. It'll be important to know that making it more difficult for businesses to compete, with more regulatory or tax burdens, may expedite that loss," he says.

Baise says he's not particularly worried about such "symbolic" promises by Democrats in the legislature and governor's office as raising the minimum wage for 155,000 Illinoisans who are at the bottom of the state's 5.2-million workforce. But he and other business leaders are concerned about having to pay more in unemployment insurance taxes and seeing more than \$1 billion

in corporate tax breaks repealed, such as the exemption on sales taxes on machinery.

Former Senate President James "Pate" Philip, a Republican from Wood Dale who grudgingly handed control of the Senate over to Jones, predicts many of labor's issues will "blow out" of the legislature, perhaps starting with Blagojevich's pledge to hike the minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour. But Philip says moves like that will come with a cost, one he says he has witnessed firsthand.

"I'll never forget this," Philip says. "Not this election, but the time before when I ran. They have a [campaign] photographer with you all day. You go

Democrats win the Senate gavel

Chicagoan Emil Jones is poised to become a main player in state government

Emil Jones wasn't idle during his 10 years as Senate minority leader. After all, he was the driving force behind the move to double the personal exemption on state income taxes in 1998, and he pushed for a 2000 tax credit that has saved the working poor \$44 million. He parlayed a 1999 gambling deal into millions of dollars for cash-strapped communities across the state. And last spring, though there were no takers, he suggested the state might get out of its budget quandary by borrowing against future settlement payments from the tobacco industry.

But being minority leader in either legislative chamber is like living the life of a Maytag repairman. Once in a while, his services are needed, but respect and recognition are in short supply, and the machinery of state government keeps churning along regardless.

Now, though, the Democrat from Chicago's South Side is poised to become a main player in state government, having achieved the highest point in a legislative career that has spanned four decades. This month, thanks to a legislative map that favored



Emil Jones

Photograph by Terry Farmer

his party's candidates, Jones will ascend to the Senate presidency, a post he has coveted since winning a seat in the chamber in 1983.

"As long as you have the patience and are willing to work with others, sometimes your dreams come true," Jones said after his party won 32 of the 59 Senate seats on November 5, guaranteeing him a fairly comfortable

voting majority.

The 67-year-old Jones, a widower and parent of four, has been in the General Assembly since 1973. He served five terms in the House before moving to the Senate, where he served another decade before taking over the Democratic caucus in 1993 from outgoing Senate President Phil Rock of Oak Park, the last Democratic Senate president. Jones' ascension came with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's blessing. He's the 34th man to serve as Senate president since 1870, and the second African American to do so.

During his stint as minority leader, Jones lacked the clout of the chief Democrat on the other side of the Capitol, House Speaker Michael Madigan of Chicago. But for at least the next two years, Jones and Madigan will be co-equals, which means Jones will have just as much say about what legislation makes it to the desk of incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Already the special interest groups are lining up to pay their respects.

"He's a thoughtful man who understands the concerns of a lot of groups," Illinois AFL-CIO President Margaret

to schools. You go to senior citizens. We wanted to do some [pictures with] labor guys, so we stopped at one of these coffee trucks, and there were guys who had been working on construction on the state highway. We pull up there and I buy coffee and rolls, and we start shooting the breeze. Four of the five guys were from Indiana. The company, the contractor, was an Indiana contractor who had the lowest bid and was doing the state work. Why? Because the workmen's comp and all their insurance, everything, is cheaper in Indiana so they can underbid us in Illinois. As far as I'm concerned that should have been an Illinois corporation, not an Indiana one, doing that

work. And the Democrats will do nothing to help that at all. It'll get worse."

Despite Democratic promises not to make life more difficult for businesses during a recession, some of the party's allies from the fall campaign are wary about how the labor-business struggle will play itself out in the General Assembly.

"What's going to happen? I don't know," says David Vite, president of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, a Republican-leaning business group that broke political tradition and endorsed Blagojevich over GOP gubernatorial candidate Jim Ryan. "I'm hopeful that all members of Illinois government

will recognize there's never been an employee without an employer, and they recognize it's not a good idea to kill the golden goose who's providing the jobs for so many people," Vite says.

"Certainly, the business community will take some hits. To what extent? That's the \$64 million question."

But if the General Assembly's cast of Democratic rookies, along with the holdovers who make up the new House and Senate majorities, cost businesses no more than \$64 million during the next two years, Vite, Baise and Philip might be pleased. □

Dave McKinney is Statehouse bureau chief for the Chicago Sun-Times.

Blackshere says of Jones. "He never says 'I.' He talks about the caucus. And that's really great for a leader to speak in that way. He also always calls you back. It may not be as quickly as you wanted. But he always calls you back in a day or day and a half. That's admirable, and it makes a difference in how people feel about you."

Jones' tenure as minority leader did hit a few bumps. There were suggestions in 1997 that he may be under investigation by the federal government for ghost payrolling in Chicago's sewer department, where he was once an inspector. His personnel records were subpoenaed by a federal grand jury, but Jones denied wrongdoing and has never been charged.

And last fall, Jones had to respond to disclosures about his steering \$4.5 million in state grants to upgrade Chicago's City Colleges computer system at a time when his stepson received millions of dollars in no-bid computer-consulting contracts with the community college system. Jones, his stepson, and the college system denied any quid pro quo.

He also faced a potential uprising within his own ranks as Senate Democrats grew restless under a Republican map in the 1990s. Jones' forces lost five elections while Madigan overcame the map and won four out of five. But that tension has evaporated

and his caucus seems secure.

"Emil and I, we made up our differences over a year ago," says Sen. James DeLeo, a Democrat from Chicago who was among those calling for new leadership in the Senate Democratic caucus but now backs Jones.

With those questions behind him, Jones says he has not shaped an agenda for the upcoming spring session. But he promises to make education "an entitlement," tying what the state spends on public schools to the rate of inflation. He wants to help working families by increasing the minimum wage and beefing up family leave and workers' compensation benefits, both issues of key importance to Blagojevich and Blackshere. And Jones has his eye on helping senior citizens get cheaper pharmaceuticals.

He also believes the state's deepening budget problems, which could result in deficits of \$2.5 billion in the next fiscal year, can be solved without resorting to a tax increase. He thinks borrowing against funds the state is getting as a result of its \$9.1 billion legal settlement against the tobacco industry is the best way to raise more revenue. Last spring, lawmakers, prodded by Jones, agreed to give Gov. George Ryan authority to borrow up to \$750 million in tobacco funds, but the state's chief executive has yet to employ that tactic.

Senate Republicans, unaccustomed

to being in the minority, are still plotting their own strategy against Jones and the Democrats, hoping the party can take advantage of President George W. Bush's popularity and regain control of the state Senate in 2004. But for now, the GOP is content to extend an olive branch to the long-serving Jones and, most of all, not give short shrift to his abilities.

"Sen. Jones has always been underestimated, both politically and governmentally," says Sen. Kirk Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican.

"I've worked with Emil as a former top aide to two governors and as a senator, and he is always underestimated," Dillard says. "Emil is much smarter and craftier than people have ever given him credit for."

Outgoing Senate President James "Pete" Philip, a Wood Dale Republican, hopes Jones will treat Republicans as he has treated Jones and the Democrats, adhering to a model of cooperation established by Rock.

"I had a very good relationship with Phil Rock," Philip says, recalling his days as minority leader in a Democratic-controlled Senate. "He'd call me every day about 20 minutes before session, and we'd talk about the things we could agree on. I've done the same thing with Emil Jones. I call him every session about 15 to 20 minutes before

we go, and tell him what we'll do and if there's anything he wants to do. We've had that same kind of relationship. I assume we'd continue."

Jones insists he intends to treat Republicans equitably as the balance of power shifts his way, lobbyists reintroduce themselves to Senate Democrats and the media begin filling the long-vacant pressbox on the Democratic side of the Senate. As if on cue from Philip, Jones says the politician he most wishes to emulate as Senate president is Rock.

"He was the epitome of statesmanship and fairness, and I really enjoyed working with him," Jones says. "He was so fair, and we intend to be basically the same way." *Dave McKinney*

Senate Republicans choose a downstater



Frank Watson

Frank Watson of Greenville replaced James "Pate" Philip of suburban Wood Dale as head of the Senate Republican caucus. The caucus elected the downstater after Philip, its longtime leader, announced he would retire (see page 34).

The GOP's power has for decades been centered in DuPage County. So Watson's victory over Kirk Dillard of Hinsdale came as a surprise. Greenville is about 50 miles east of St. Louis. Watson says regionalism didn't determine the vote, but he does stress his roots. "The message is that a downstater is not unacceptable to this

caucus. My message to my members will be one of unanimity: I want to see people working together, whether it's upstate or downstate."

Watson, a pharmacist, calls himself a fiscal and social conservative. He has served in the legislature for 23 years.

The Editors

Four freshmen

Thirty-two new lawmakers will be seated this month in the 93rd General Assembly. We highlight four who hail from distinct regions of Illinois: the southern and west central reaches of the state, Chicago and its suburbs. Each of these freshmen, who collectively represent a cross section of both parties and both legislative chambers, brings a different perspective to the melting pot that is Statehouse politics.

It's a family tradition



Brandon Phelps
Norris City
HOUSE 118TH

Politics was play for the Phelps cousins. With a collection of discarded banners and buttons, their grandfather's southern Illinois barn was transformed into a make-believe

campaign headquarters. Stump speeches echoed in the dusty air.

"We weren't normal," says Brandon Phelps, laughing. The Democrat is the latest in his clan to win elective office.

These days, after church each Sunday, the Phelps family can be found sitting around a kitchen table talking politics. Brandon's uncle, U.S. Rep. David Phelps, has held elective office for 22 years, beginning as the Saline County clerk and ending up as the congressman from the 19th District. He lost his re-election bid for that post in November.

As a result, Brandon Phelps' 32 years belie his seasoning in the political process. The Norris City Democrat was elected in November to the 118th District House seat his uncle held for 14 years.

He says his family's well-publicized faith is reflected in his philosophy on public service. "I was brought up that this is a higher calling. And, if you think you can make a difference for someone, why not put yourself out there. Life's short: Try to help out as much as you can. I know that sounds like a cliche, but I believe in that."

"To be honest with you, though, I never thought I wanted to put my name on the ballot. I've always kind

of liked to be the guy behind the scenes — do the door-to-door, the 'grassroots' thing, raise the money."

In addition to campaigning for his uncle, he worked on the successful races of state legislators Larry Woolard and Jim Fowler, and was chair of Gary Forby's campaign. "I knew how to get somebody elected, but I wasn't sure if I knew how to get myself elected."

He had acquired, to his advantage, an intimate knowledge of the district: "I knew where to go, I knew the players. Geographically, this is the biggest district in the state, but the people knew me because I had been at their door, knocking, asking for a vote."

The district includes the state's poorest counties: Alexander and Pulaski. Another large chunk of the district is devoted to the Shawnee National Forest, which offers beauty, but not income. Still, some urban areas have been showing signs of an economic comeback. The Ohio River city of Metropolis, spurred on by riverboat gambling receipts, has been able to upgrade and beautify its riverfronts and infrastructure. Marion, to the north, has seen expansion in its industrial sector and has become a major

House Republican leader pledges reform



Tom Cross

Tom Cross, the new Illinois House GOP leader, is pledging to reform House Republican campaign efforts, including separating the legislative and campaign staffs.

House Republicans elected Cross, from the northeastern Illinois community of Oswego in Kendall County, to take over as GOP chief in that chamber. Cross had previously served as deputy

minority leader. He replaced Lee Daniels, who had been House GOP leader for two decades.

Daniels, who has been dogged by allegations that his

staff did political work on state time, opted not to seek that post again.

Cross, a political protégé of U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, beat fellow deputy minority leader Art Tenhouse of Liberty. Tenhouse had been backed by Daniels.

Cross' affiliation with Hastert began in the 1970s when he was a history student of Hastert's at Yorkville High School. The relationship has been a lucrative one. Hastert funneled thousands of dollars to Cross' re-election campaign through his National Republican Congressional Committee.

A lawyer by trade and a former prosecutor in the Kendall County state's attorney's office, Cross has served in the Illinois House since 1993.

The Editors

shipping hub along the I-57 corridor.

Labor is a key issue for Phelps, who represents a district where education is the No. 1 employer and corrections isn't far behind. He says, "I got very close to AFSCME." Phelps was on the front line with those protesting the closing of the correctional facility at Vienna. "I was with them every day, walking picket lines, at rallies, and I would have done anything in the world to keep that place open."

Phelps points to the stagnant tax base as the source of many of the district's problems. "We've got a lot of schools down here that really struggle. We don't get our fair share of the education 'pie,' so to speak. I want to lure businesses and industry down here by working with [Gov.-elect] Rod Blagojevich and his venture capital plan. If we can create a bigger tax base, it is going to help everything else."

If it sounds like Phelps is prepared to toe the party line, think again. His political ideology is somewhat right of the middle. He says he supports outgoing Gov. George Ryan's death penalty moratorium, but still has a fundamental belief in capital punishment. Abortion: "Pro-life, absolutely." Gun control: "I am a member of the NRA."

Phelps, in his camo jacket working the crowd at the Golconda Deer Festival, certainly blends in among a populace that likes its gospel live and its Democrats southern-fried. With the strains of the Phelps Brothers Quartet wafting in the air, he scans the gathering throng, looking for a face he doesn't recognize.

Joseph Andrew Carrier

Samaritan to senator



John Sullivan
Rushville
SENATE 47TH

On a cold November evening 11 years ago, Democratic state Sen. Miguel del Valle spun off a slick,

snowy two-lane highway into a ditch as he headed out of Springfield toward Macomb. A stranger on his way to see his wife and newborn son at the hospital drove by in a pickup with his three young children. When he spotted the car, the man in the pickup pulled over and towed the senator back onto the roadway.

He left without giving a name or accepting the \$20 offered. But his license plate number traced to a John Sullivan of Rushville. Del Valle tracked down Sullivan's address and sent him a thank-you note.

Fast forward to the year 2001. John Sullivan approached del Valle on the floor of the Illinois Senate. He introduced himself, this time as a potential Democratic candidate for state Senate in the new 47th District. To run meant challenging 20-year incumbent Republican Laura Kent Donahue, a popular legislator expected to win easily in a strongly Republican district.

"I told him you have to run; you are a good person," says del Valle. It turned out to be good advice. Sullivan pulled off a surprise victory in the November election. "The voters must have seen the same thing in him that I saw," del Valle says.

What the voters got is a farmer, auctioneer and avid hunter from Rushville, a town of just over 3,000 in the midst of an area once nicknamed "Forgottonia" by some unhappy voters looking for more attention from the state legislature.

Agriculture is the largest, but not often prosperous, business driving the area's economic engine. To the north is Macomb, home of Western Illinois University. To the southwest, along the Mississippi River bluffs, sits Quincy. Between them lies mainly farmland dotted with very small towns working to hold onto what business they have and to maintain their strapped school systems.

Within the 13-county area that makes up the 47th, the name Sullivan is familiar. One of 11 children, John Sullivan has lived throughout the district. Born in Macomb, Sullivan attended Catholic grammar school before the Sullivans moved to Nauvoo in 1967.

Later, the family moved to Hamilton, where John attended public high school before leaving for Quincy College in 1977. He later married and moved to Rushville. He and his wife Joan now have four children and live on a small farm just north of town.

Sullivan says the idea of entering politics came to him when he was 10 years old, knocking on doors to help campaign for a friend of the family who was running for county office. "That is something I have never forgotten. It was such a positive event for me, getting feedback from people."

Sullivan says he decided to jump into politics against a popular incumbent because "it seemed the time was right. I had a gut feeling."

He did have some advantages to back up that hunch. All but one of his siblings actively took part in the campaign. And Sullivan was able to reach far outside of his district for support. State Democratic Party members made up the largest chunk of the \$357,000 raised for the campaign. In fact, Sullivan found support from as far away as Hollywood. Sullivan's uncle John Mahoney (better known as Frasier's dad on the popular television series) donated \$30,000 to the

campaign, and recorded a radio ad that ran on stations throughout the district.

Now that he's got the job, he wants to draw legislative attention to Forgottonia. "If we can get roads in the district, that will bring business, the business will bring jobs, the jobs will increase the tax base and provide money for the schools. It's cyclical."

*Margaret Schroeder
Springfield-based free-lance writer*

Winner of the family feud



The Rev. James Meeks
Chicago
SENATE 15TH

Richard J. Daley was first elected to the Illinois House as a Republican, so who's to question the Rev. James Meeks for getting elected to the state Senate as a member of the Honesty and Integrity Party?

Like Daley before him, he will declare himself a Democrat as soon as he gets to Springfield, he says.

Meeks, the Rev. Jesse Jackson's heir apparent at the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, defeated longtime incumbent state Sen. William Shaw November 5. He argued that Shaw, a Democrat who is also mayor of Dolton, has been involved in too many scandals over the years to continue to serve the predominantly African-American district.

Though the Senate's Democratic leader Emil Jones worked hard for Shaw, Meeks promised to support Jones' candidacy for Senate president.

Shaw, who was moving up in the leadership ranks and set to take over a

committee chairmanship, bragged he brought home a lot of bacon to the poverty-plagued district that covers the far South Side of Chicago and the poorest of the south suburbs, including Ford Heights.

Meeks, who comes from the impoverished Roseland neighborhood, hopes to keep the flow of state dollars coming, but he has promised to try to spread it around more than Shaw, whom he accused during the campaign of favoring some towns more than others.

Meeks built his Salem Baptist Church on Chicago's far South Side from 200 members in 1985 to what he says is a 17,000-strong congregation. He counts as members of his congregation U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., state Rep. David Miller, Cook County Commissioner Deborah Sims and 9th Ward Alderman Anthony Beale.

Over the years, Meeks has taken an ever-more-visible role in the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, accompanying the Rev. Jackson on missions at home and abroad. He counseled Jackson during embarrassing revelations two years ago that Jackson fathered an out-of-wedlock child.

Meeks has likewise counseled rhythm and blues superstar R. Kelly, indicted on 21 counts of child pornography, and former U.S. Rep. Mel Reynolds, whom Meeks hired at Salem after Reynolds was released from prison.

Meeks broke into politics fighting successfully to ban sales of alcohol along Michigan Avenue near his church. His successful referendum closed a dozen bars and liquor stores. He said clearing out the gangsters and drug dealers who hung out in front of those establishments would help bring new businesses to the strip.

So far, the only new business is the church's gleaming House of Peace bookstore, which would put any new Barnes & Noble to shame in size and sophistication. Meeks expects more businesses to follow.

Meeks helped elect his parishioner Beale as alderman over Shaw's nephew, who opposed the liquor referendum. U.S. Rep. Jackson also backed Beale, helping start the family feud between the Jacksons (together with Meeks)

and the Shaws — Bill and his brother Bob, the Cook County Board of Review commissioner.

Though Meeks ultimately won the battle for Shaw's state Senate seat, Shaw surprised everyone by showing up at Meeks' victory party and giving him a bear hug for the cameras. Meeks then praised Shaw as "a giant of a man."

Shaw then praised Meeks, saying, "There is a lot of work ahead, but I believe that the Rev. Meeks is capable of fulfilling that responsibility."

One top priority Meeks says he wants to work on is Rep. Jackson's crusade to start building the Peotone airport, which Meeks and Jackson say will bring jobs to the south suburbs and the South Side.

*Abdon Pallasch
Chicago Sun-Times*

She does her homework



**Sandra Pihos
Glen Ellyn
HOUSE 42ND**

It was just after dawn and Sandra Pihos was waiting for the school bus. Not the normal means of transportation for a then-54-year-old businesswoman in the bustling DuPage County suburbs.

She had heard complaints that students were spending too much time on the bus to and from school. Some parents argued a new high school was needed to remedy the situation. Pihos, a member of the Glenbard High School District 87 school board, wanted to see exactly what was going on.

So she hopped on the bus with dozens of high school students and concluded

the commute wasn't that bad. Voters agreed. They later rejected four school board candidates who argued for a new high school.

Those who know her say the story is Sandra Pihos in a nutshell.

"She's so thorough in what she cares about. And she wants to understand and get down to the grassroots level before she takes sides," says Shirley Bloom, school board president in Glen Ellyn School District 89, one of the elementary school districts feeding into the Glenbard High School District. "She will get down to the nitty gritty of the issues. She will try to investigate and understand all sides of the issue before coming to a conclusion."

Described as a tireless problem solver with boundless energy and a willingness to get out and talk to those affected, Pihos can soon put her talents to use in the Illinois House. Voters in the 42nd District elected her to be their state representative in November.

"Whatever it is that Sandy undertakes ... she does not just do 100 percent but beyond that," says Joy Talsma, who served nearly six years on the school board with Pihos. "She is extremely thorough. She does her homework."

The 42nd is located smack in the middle of DuPage County and personifies the daily issues facing the sprawling suburbs and their residents. Two major tollways — I-88 and I-355 — intersect here, carrying hundreds of thousands of commuters to work and home each day, while nearby the 1,700 acre Morton Arboretum is a nature and wildlife refuge tucked into the middle of suburbia.

Glen Ellyn Republican Vincent Persico had represented the area. But he stepped down to pursue a lobbying career. Former high-powered lobbyist Roger Marquardt, a Lombard Republican, replaced Persico, but Marquardt did not seek election, opening the seat to a wild five-way Republican primary.

Although a newcomer to the state's political scene, Pihos proved to be adept at campaigning. With the backing of Persico and former Republican state Sen. Beverly Fawell, she won the five-way race for the Republican nomination and then beat Democrat Terri Brzezinski and Libertarian Michael Mandel, both

The 42nd is located smack in the middle of DuPage County and personifies the daily issues facing the sprawling suburbs and their residents.

of Downers Grove.

Pihos, vice president of Pihos Enterprises, a restaurant management firm, is a former teacher and guidance counselor. She was first elected to the school board in 1993 and was elected board president last year.

Her ascension to board leadership caused some rancor among supporters of the previous board president, whose supporters said it was timed to help Pihos' bid for the General Assembly. Pihos rebuffed the claims in a letter, noting that she had been touted for the post in 1999, but after the death of her youngest son deferred to someone else.

In 1999, her 19-year-old son Michael died in a freak tractor accident in Deep Springs, Calif., where he went to college. The family established Michael's Place Literacy Center in March 2001 at Park View Elementary School in Glen Ellyn.

Pihos, who has three other children, says she feels compelled to keep her son's agenda alive. "It's one of the reasons I'm very interested in concentrating on the environment. It's one of the issues he had," Pihos says.

But it is her experience on the school board that might best prepare her for the Capitol conflicts that await in the General Assembly. Local school issues have often divided over regional lines within the school district boundaries. Those in the northern portion have argued for a new high school and claim the southern power base ignores them. It's not unlike the frequent downstate versus metro conflicts that often dictate debates more than partisan leanings in the General Assembly.

*John Patterson
Daily Herald*

Dear Governor



Illinois Issues asked three civic activists what advice they might have to offer incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich. They offered these thoughtful responses. We pass them along to you, our readers, and to the new administration.

The Editors

Howard Learner

*Executive Director,
Environmental Law and Policy Center*



You have some powerful opportunities to succeed. It won't be easy because you have been elected at a tough time for Illinois as the budget crisis looms large and the Bush Administration may be less inclined to steer added federal support to a Democratic administration in Illinois. Governing during bull markets is relatively easy — you fund the programs you believe in, and you fund enough of the ones you don't to gain the support of fence-sitters. Governing during bear markets requires far more skill, vision and determination.

But it also provides an important opportunity to re-evaluate "business as usual," ensuring that the benefit of every tax dollar is maximized. This is the time to eliminate outdated programs and to reform ineffective ones.

First, you are on the right track in talking about streamlining state government, making it work better for the public and restoring integrity to Illinois government. The public is more than ready to reform state government, is disgusted with lucrative insider business deals, and tired of endless stories about "no-show" patronage appointees. That public perception is unfair to the many good people in state government, but Illinois political and governmental cognoscenti do know that there is too much reality in this perception. Clean it up — the state's budget crisis compels better government and enables you to push aside some old-time political barriers.

Second, you can apply a "green scissors" approach to meeting the public's demand for environmental improvements while still cutting some costs and eliminating subsidies. Just as a recession strengthens the economy by weeding out less productive investments, it can act as a powerful tool for

improving government. For example, 39 states apply water pollution permit fees so that the "polluter pays" for the public costs of permitting facilities and monitoring and enforcing the Clean Water Act standards. Illinois doesn't. This taxpayer subsidy — and another one for Clean Air Act permitting, monitoring and enforcement — costs the state millions of dollars each year. It's time to be more fiscally sensible and end the free ride.

Another example: The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority says that it doesn't have enough money to maintain the existing tollways, but wants to spend billions of dollars building sprawl-inducing new ones. This pyramid scheme — building costly new tollroads while the maintenance, repair and rehab deficit grows — must stop. Put aside wishes for unaffordable proposed new tollways and direct the agency to focus its attention on protecting its current assets.

Third, environmental progress and economic development can be

Installing modern energy efficient technologies in commercial office buildings and in our homes saves money, reduces the energy dollar outflow from Illinois' economy and avoids pollution.

achieved together in Illinois. The old "jobs versus environment" dichotomy is an outdated myth. More clean energy development means more good jobs in Illinois as shown by the recent *Job Jolt* economic analysis by the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory at the University of Illinois. Wind power development is a win-win-win for farmers, our economy and the environment. It produces a new income stream for farmers, creates jobs and enhances rural economic development, and provides environmental quality benefits for everyone. Installing modern energy efficient technologies in commercial office buildings and in our homes saves money, reduces the energy dollar outflow from Illinois' economy and avoids pollution.

Better environmental protection and natural resources preservation are bipartisan goals in Illinois with overwhelming public concern and support. You can create a better legacy for our state by building green state office buildings that are energy efficient and located on Main Streets to strengthen the downtown areas and curb sprawl, get modern high-speed rail on track and protect parklands for the future. How many natural areas can you protect and how many green buildings can you build?

You can further the politics of hope versus the politics of cynicism, and build a legacy for the people of our state. This is a great opportunity for a governor, like you, who is excited by challenging times. □

Jerome Stermer
President,
Voices for Illinois Children

Gov. Blagojevich, you'll have plenty of opportunities when you look at what's pending on the policy agenda for children and families.

While the most recent data show encouraging progress, we're a long way from where we want to be. By anybody's yardstick, far too many of our state's children are left behind when it comes to education, health care and strong families with adequate incomes. The disparities between children who are doing well and those who aren't should compel us to be much more aggressive with a children's agenda, and as our new governor you are in a unique position to make a real difference.

No matter what level of enthusiasm you bring to a children's agenda, your success will be measured by how well you manage the state's unprecedented budget crisis. You absolutely must open up the budget process, let the sunshine in and restore the public's trust in state government. That's a tall order, but without the confidence of the voters state government will never have adequate revenues to pay for even the basics of education, health care and social services.

The Blagojevich approach to cuts, restructuring, payment delays, borrowing, fees, taxes and challenges to Congress to send financial assistance (are there any other options?) will be the hallmark of your leadership; but your real legacy will be the impact of your policies on children and their future. So how to begin? For openers you should lay out a two-part plan that prioritizes economic supports for families and aggressive strategies for improving education.

There is widespread recognition that children do well when their families do well. Though state government isn't the only important player in the question of household income, state policy matters a great deal. In addition to your proposal to establish a state minimum wage, Gov. Blagojevich,

you should persuade the legislature to reauthorize and expand the state earned income tax credit. You should be aggressive in implementing options from the new federal farm bill to make it easier for more working families to receive food stamps. Reforming the unemployment insurance program in Illinois could give coverage to more low-wage workers. And as you look to maintain and improve Illinois' impressive record in welfare reform, you will need to upgrade employment supports as well as education and training programs. Child care eligibility — still frozen at 1997 levels — desperately needs to be updated, and the new Family Care health insurance program should be made available to many more working families. Rounding out the family agenda is your thoughtful campaign promise to, at long last, re-tool child support enforcement.

As you turn to education, Governor, start with the framework of the Early Learning Illinois campaign that envisions that all Illinois children will be healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter kindergarten. We must improve and expand the variety of early childhood programs already up and running in Illinois for children ages birth through 5. You campaigned on the vision that every student be a successful reader by third grade and wisely pledged to implement a policy of universal access to preschool over the next five years. Success in school is based on building a strong foundation of early literacy, along with developing children's hearts, minds and souls, beginning at home and supported by good early learning programs staffed by well-trained and well-paid professionals.

The new federal education policy lays out a challenging agenda of standards, student achievement and professional development that must be addressed. Promising strategies such as community schools and good after-school programs also will make a big difference and can't be thought of as "extras." Yet almost no one really believes we will have major progress in narrowing the education achievement gap without restructuring our system of school finances.

Our children's future is too precious for us to not make these kinds of smart investments in strong families and quality education. Neither you, Governor, nor the public can afford to risk our future by shortchanging the present. The opportunity is now. □

Leon M. Lederman

Resident Scholar, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, director emeritus of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Pritzker professor of science at the Illinois Institute of Technology and 1988 Nobel Laureate in physics.



The alarming lack of science literacy in the general public is often demonstrated on nightly television when host Jay Leno asks ordinary people questions such as: "How long does it take for the earth to go around the sun?" Or, "Which is bigger, an atom or an electron?" Or, "What causes the tides?" Sadly, three out of three wrong answers is the norm.

Today, popular science illiteracy is having serious consequences in the deterioration of the U.S. workforce and the large expenditure corporations must make in remedial education. The declining number of Americans choosing science and technology careers has brought the Federal Reserve Board chairman to Congress, pleading for improvements in science education in our schools and urgently warning against continued dependence upon immigration to supply our science-trained workforce.

The following "advice" to you, Governor, has evolved out of this physicist's experience with the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, a pioneering educational institution created by the state to develop talent and stimulate excellence in teaching and learning of mathematics, science and technology; by outreach programs of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory; and by the Teachers' Academy for Math and Science, a professional development effort addressed to primary schoolteachers.

Each experience has molded my practice as a research scientist and teacher.

The public's science illiteracy does not help when we, as a state or as a nation, must make difficult public policy decisions on, say, stem cell research, genetically engineered foods or on environmental repairs — especially when political, economic and social considerations must be balanced against the scientific ones.

Finally, there is little in our ignorant populations to protect against the irrational: reports of alien visitations, of psychics, of faith healers, of inventors of new perpetual motion machines and a superior snake oil that simultaneously cures baldness and ingrown toenails.

The education rhetoric of presidents, governors and mayors indicates that all recognize the seriousness of the problem. That it persists indicates that we do not accept the trauma and the costs of fixing it.

To educate all high school students to a level where they will acquire the lifelong habit of a science way of thinking, we need two major revolutions in our schools: a corps of teachers who are well-trained in teaching science and comfortable with available educational technologies (how to teach); and a coherent science curriculum that balances content and process, which builds from the concrete to the abstract, and which uses a minimum of three years to teach, in sufficient depth, the big ideas in the 20th century core disciplines of math, physics, chemistry and biology (what to teach).

For the first, there are three problem epochs: the recruiting of the best students into teaching, the relevant training of teachers and the retention of teachers as valued professionals. We must, of course, raise the economic and social status of teachers. We must ensure (a trend that is slowly taking hold) the command of content and the cognitive science that underlies excellent teaching. We need continuous, lifelong professional development in an environment that respects innovation and the high level of professionalism that goes with being "a teacher."

Governor, consider proposing

Popular science illiteracy is having serious consequences in the deterioration of the U.S. workforce and the large expenditures corporations must make in remedial education.

something really radical — perhaps 20 percent of the teachers' time should be spent, often collegially, in becoming better teachers. We need universities and laboratories to offer services, research opportunities, summer positions and continuous mentoring to support teachers. In this way, we will rebuild the workforce to a new level of teaching ability.

Second, we need a thorough revision of the hundred-year-old science curriculum that most U.S. high schools still use. We need continuous communication among teachers to ensure that the math enters logically and that the sciences all exercise math, but also that physics underlies chemistry and both support molecular-based biology. The courses must emphasize connecting ideas and, in each case, how science works, how it is self-correcting and how aesthetically beautiful it is to recognize how much mankind has learned about the world and how much this knowledge, ethically applied, can provide comfort and the potential for human fulfillment. It will take a governor with courage and a mandate to initiate these crucial reforms, especially since the payoff is so far downstream.

Much of what I have written was learned, sharpened and strengthened by my experience of "living" in the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy as its first Resident Scholar. We have learned that educational innovations, such as problem-based learning, inquiry and the free rein for student ownership of their learning, can have profound effects on the gifted, but also on students throughout Illinois. □

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PEOPLE

by Maureen Foertsch McKinney

END OF AN ERA

Unapologetically politically incorrect James "Pate" Philip, the DuPage County Republican who is Illinois' longest-serving legislator, announced he would retire from Senate leadership and resign his seat.

"I've been here long enough," Philip told reporters. "I'm 72. It's time to go."

Philip was elected to the Illinois House in 1966 and the Senate eight years later. He had held the Senate presidency since 1993 (see *Illinois Issues*, October 2002, page 35; October 1997, page 14). But Republican fortunes have turned in Illinois. Not only did Democrats take the majority Senate role, Philip saw many of his comrades ousted from office.

Philip, who counts among his accomplishments thwarting assault weapons bans and school funding reforms that would have cost his suburban constituency, served in Senate leadership since 1979 when he became assistant minority leader.

The 35-year veteran lawmaker from Wood Dale drew attention for off-color remarks. His take on bilingual education: "Let 'em learn English." On Department of Children and Family Services minority workers: Some "don't have the same work ethic that we have."



James "Pate" Philip

Departures



Ronald Michaelson

to pass up. But he's not ready to kick back quite yet.

"I'm not going to play golf all day," says Michaelson, whose agency has a \$9 million budget and a staff of 65. "I'm going to stay active and contribute to the process."

Ronald Michaelson became the first executive director of the Illinois State Board of Elections in 1974 and has been on the job since. He will retire from that post on May 1 after 29 years.

Michaelson, who has worked for the state since the late 1960s, says the financial incentives offered through an early retirement plan were too lucrative

Gifts from the outgoing governor

Ignoring protests from incoming Gov. Rod Blagojevich, the state Senate approved paid appointments that outgoing Gov. George Ryan handed to pals and departing GOP lawmakers.

Ryan also found jobs for other loyalists, including communications aide Dave Urbanek and Ag Director Joe Hampton. Ryan named Urbanek executive director of the Illinois Building Commission, a four-year slot that pays \$99,000 a year. Hampton on December 1 moved over to the Department of Natural Resources, where he'll be paid more than \$70,000 as senior public administrator.

Appointments approved by the Senate included those for two longtime lawmakers who lost re-election bids in November. Sen. Laura Kent Donahue of Quincy got a \$79,779 appointment to the Educational Labor Relations Board and Rep. Ann Zickus of Palos Hills won a \$93,308 job as deputy commissioner of the Office of Banks and Real Estate.

In all, 21 paid positions on various state boards and commissions were filled by Senate vote. The combined salaries of those jobs is more than \$1 million annually. That doesn't include other appointments made by Ryan that didn't require the Senate's approval.

Other Ryan staffers to get multiyear appointments include his legal counsel Diane Ford, named to a \$101,790 post on the Illinois Industrial Commission; deputy counsel Mark Warnsing, named to the Prisoner Review Board at \$72,950; and his legislative director Michael Madigan, who got a spot on the Labor Relations Board that will pay him \$79,779 a year until 2006.

Democrat Blagojevich, who couldn't convince Ryan, a Republican, or the GOP-controlled Senate to hold off on making rapid-fire appointments before he takes office this month, pledged to reduce the number of state boards and commissions.

Other appointees approved by the Senate are: Joseph Hannon, acting director of the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, named to a \$79,779 post on the Educational Labor Relations Board; Pam McDonough, former director of the state Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, tapped to chair the Labor Relations Board Local Panel for \$88,641; and Stephen Schnorf, Ryan's former budget director, appointed to the Liquor Control Commission, a \$28,924 post.



Laura Kent Donahue



Ann Zickus

Michaelson, who will continue to teach on an adjunct basis at the University of Illinois at Springfield, is also on the advisory committee of the Federal Election Commission.

The biggest challenge for his successor and the elections board, he says, will be implementing changes that come out of recent federal election reform legislation. Money appropriated through the Help America Vote Act will be funneled through state election agencies.

Another veteran state worker announcing retirement plans is Dick Adorjan, who has been a spokesman for the Illinois Department of Transportation since 1970. Prior to going to work for the state, Adorjan was a Statehouse reporter for United Press International.

Advice for the new governor

Incoming Gov. Blagojevich created 16 advisory panels to help him with his transition. Among those panel members:

- On agriculture: state Rep. **Chuck Hartke**, a Teutopolis Democrat; **Joseph Sullivan**, chairman and former CEO of the Vigoro Corp.
- On civil rights: **Vera Davis**, president of the West Side Branch of the NAACP; and **Martin King**, board chairman of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.
- On consumer affairs and regulatory policy: **John Mitola**, CEO of Electric City Corp.; **Charles Hill**, board chairman of the Woodstock Institute; and **Ron Kastner**, president and financial secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 21.
- On crime, public safety and anti-terrorism: **Ted Street**, president of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police; **Diane Williams**, president and CEO of the SAFER Foundation, a social service agency for ex-convicts; and **Polly Poskin**, executive director of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault.
- On economic development: **Vincent Barnes**, executive director of Rebirth of Englewood Community Development Corp.; **Paul O'Connor**, executive director of World Business Chicago; state Sen. **Larry Woolard** of Carterville; and **David Vite**, president of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association.
- On elementary and secondary education: **Anne Davis**, president of the Illinois Education Association; **James Dougherty**, president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers; **Sarah Williamson**, president of the Illinois PTA; and **Michael Johnson**, executive director of the Illinois Association of School Boards.
- On environment/energy/natural resources: state Rep. **Joel Brunsvold** of Milan; and **Howard Learner**, executive director of the Environmental Law and Policy Center.
- On ethics: former congressman and White House Counsel **Abner Mikva**; **Mary Lee Leahy**, labor attorney and former director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; and **Dawn Clark Netsch**, former state comptroller and state senator.
- On health: **Joyce Washington**, president and CEO of the Washington Group; **Dr. J. Kevin Dorsey**, dean and provost at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield; **Pamela Sutherland**, CEO and president of the Illinois Planned Parenthood Council; and **Raghuvir Nayak**, an architect of the proposed Cook County Prescription Assistance Coverage for the Elderly program.
- On higher education: state Rep. **Judy Erwin** of Chicago, and **James Walker**, president of Southern Illinois University.
- On housing: **U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush**, Democrat of Chicago.
- On labor: **Dennis Gannon**, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; and **Ron Powell**, president of Local 881 of the United Food and Commercial Workers.
- On local government: Cook County Board President **John Stroger**; Cook County Assessor **James Houlihan**; Edwardsville Mayor and Illinois Municipal League President **Gary Niebur**; and Palatine Mayor **Rita Mullins**.
- On social services: **Tina Tchen**, a Chicago lawyer; **Barbara Jones Green**, founder of Lakeside Community Center; and **Loretta Durbin**, vice president of Government Affairs Specialists Inc. and wife of U.S. Sen. **Dick Durbin**.
- On streamlining government: **MarySue Barrett**, president of the Metropolitan Planning Council; state Sen.-elect **Jeffrey Schoenberg** of Evanston; and **John McCarter Jr.**, president and CEO of the Field Museum and former state budget director.
- On transportation: U.S. Rep. **William O. Lipinski**, a Chicago Democrat; and state Rep. **Jay Hoffman**, a Collinsville Democrat.

For more on the transition, see *Illinois Issues Online* at illinoisissues.uis.edu

Big people on campus

Thomas Lamont's term on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees was to have expired this month. But Gov. George Ryan tapped Lamont to serve out the term of former board chairman **Gerald Shea**, who stepped down on December 31.

Lamont, a Springfield attorney, was elected to the board in 1990 and began serving in 1991. He was chairman in 1992, 1995 and 1996.

He was reappointed to a second six-year term by Gov. Jim Edgar in 1997.

Transition team

Governor-elect Rod Blagojevich looked largely to his campaign roster in selecting staff for his transition team.

Transition Director **David Wilhelm** was chairman of the campaign. Wilhelm, former Democratic National Committee chair, also was campaign manager for Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential bid. State Sen. **Carol Ronen**, a Chicago Democrat, deputy transition director, also was a campaign senior adviser. Attorney **Alonzo Monk**, campaign manager, is personnel director of the transition team.

A couple of former staffers to U.S. Rep. **Luis Gutierrez**, another Chicago Democrat, are among Blagojevich campaign workers moving over to the transition team. **Doug Scofield**, the former chief of staff to Gutierrez, was a deputy campaign manager for Blagojevich and is the communications and policy director for the transition. Gutierrez's former press secretary **Billy Weinberg** was campaign press secretary and serves in that capacity on the transition. The team's deputy press secretary, **Megan Glenn**, volunteer coordinator **Sol Ross** and policy directors **Deanne Benos** and **Deborah Stone** had those roles in the campaign.

Deputy campaign managers **Brian Daly** and **Louanner Peters** are transition team logistics director and public outreach director, respectively.

Not fools or liars, just professional politicians

As much as I admire Charles Wheeler, I think he misses some key points in his indictment of candidates Blagojevich and Ryan (see *Illinois Issues*, November, page 42). Instead of being fools or liars, Rod and Jim may simply be professional politicians.

A professional politician would know that voters in Illinois have consistently refused to give tax increase proposals a fair hearing.

A professional politician would know that the members of the press, including reporters like Mr. Wheeler, inevitably put a "Tax Increase Proposed" spin on any plan to maintain services by increasing revenues.

Many hands created this year's stump speeches. Ask yourself, "Who aids and abets our candidates when they evade the truth?" Ask yourself, "When will the press move beyond tracking foolish opinions to the task of informing citizens?"

*Gary Davis
Lincoln*



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Madeleine Doubek



Will Illinois' GOP rise from the ashes and soot?

by **Madeleine Doubek**

Ahh, finally January. A new year for everyone, including Illinois Republicans. Good thing. Because the old year was almost as bad as it gets. The Grand Old Party lost its nearly three-decade control on the governor's mansion. It lost its hold on the Illinois Senate and continued its minority status in the House and on the state Supreme Court. It lost every statewide office except treasurer. In that slot, incumbent Judy Baar Topinka defeated Democrat Tom Dart.

Now, to that sole victor goes the job of cleaning up the toxic soil that is the remains of the Illinois Republican Party. Riverside resident Topinka was tapped by state central committeemen to chair the party through the 2004 election. Will it be two years of rising brilliantly from the ash and soot?

It is possible, but it is just as possible the GOP poison will leach quickly.

First, the positive signs: Topinka made Illinois history by becoming the first woman from either major party to take the helm of a state party organization. She took on the job with her usual unflagging energy and determination.

She spoke of regaining GOP majorities in the Illinois House and Senate, a task that surely will take far longer than two years under a Democrat-drawn map. But she also gave voice to the truth when she resolved, "We must do more to recruit and train strong candidates to represent the next generation of Republicans."

The unspoken part of that truth is that the Illinois Democratic Party has done a

better job of priming the next generation, even if that next generation quite literally is made up of the sons and daughters and sons-in-law of the former one.

Joining Topinka in a new GOP leadership role is House Republican Leader Tom Cross, an Oswego resident who is a protégé of U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert. Cross won support from a coalition of liberal and conservative House Republicans who joined forces to develop new caucus rules that should give rank-and-file more say over politics and policy. Other fresher, younger faces eager to help fill the GOP leadership void include such suburbanites as Dan Cronin of Elmhurst, Kirk Dillard of Hinsdale and Steve Rauschenberger of Elgin.

In their most optimistic moments, Republicans think about the state's growing budget deficit and the likelihood that taxes will have to be hiked.

They think about Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and state Democratic Chairman Mike Madigan and Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the notion that each will believe they reign supreme. Republicans think about all the ambitious Democrats who hunger for long-withheld power, and those Republicans begin to believe they will sprout strong growth sooner.

But believing never makes it so. The toxicity runs deep. Topinka may need an entire GOP Protection Agency to clean up the Republican spill.

Voters will not soon forget George Ryan's Operation Safe Road scandal. Indeed, his former chief of staff Scott

Fawell's corruption trial also is to begin in this first month of the new year.

And, despite the disastrous election, there is no sign of an end to the crippling battle between the GOP's liberal and conservative wings. Social conservatives see the selection of abortion rights advocates Topinka and Cross and believe little was learned last November.

Conservatives aren't even sure whether to trust U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald in a party leadership role. Perhaps no Illinois Republican has a larger stake in wanting to see a rebuilt party than conservative Fitzgerald. He hopes to lead his party's ticket in 2004. Yet conservatives wonder what to make of his suggestion that outgoing Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood, an abortion rights supporter, be considered for a state party role. Fitzgerald has angered his party's establishment with his opposition to O'Hare International Airport expansion and anything else that remotely smells of an insider deal. An Inverness resident who built his career on independence, Fitzgerald finds it can breed alone-ness. Topinka did not mention the sitting senator's name when she spoke of retaining that seat late last fall, and some elected Republicans talk openly of finding him a primary foe.

The more things don't really change this year, the more Topinka and her fellow Republicans may need to invest in some hazmat suits. □

Madeleine Doubek is metro editor for projects & politics at the Daily Herald, a suburban metro newspaper.




Illinois budgeteers might consider this solution to the state's budget crisis

by **Mike Morsch**

I have the answer to Illinois' budget woes and it's quite simple, really.

The state should win its own lottery.

After all, according to the lottery's Web site (www.illinoislottery.com), "You don't have to be good with numbers to play the lottery."

There you have it. Considering the budget shortfall facing Gov.-elect Rod Blagojevich and the newest Statehouse crew — a shortfall some estimate at \$3 billion next fiscal year — it's apparent Illinois hasn't been good with numbers for a while, which falls right in line with the lottery's description of what it takes to be a lottery player.

And it's not like the state is a stranger to scandal. So putting the fix into the ping-pong balls shouldn't garner any bigger headlines than we're used to seeing, although it's feasible the ping-pong ball makers might take offense at compromising the integrity of their product. However, we should point out to these folks that, were it not for lotteries, there would be little market for ping-pong balls because nobody really plays ping-pong anymore, not even on ESPN2.

One could argue the state already is getting its beak wet in the lottery's pool of money. True enough. According to the lottery Web site, "By law, all lottery profits are deposited into the state's Common School Fund supporting kindergarten through 12th grade public education. Illinois students and schoolrooms receive nearly \$600 million

per year in lottery revenue — about 9.6 percent of the state's annual contribution to K-12 education."

Despite that, there is no ignoring the fact that the state still needs to balance its checkbook. And we have to go where the money is.

We could look to past lottery winners to help lighten the load. Considering that the lottery has created more than 1,000 millionaires in its history, it wouldn't seem unreasonable to ask each to give back, say, \$1 million apiece, although I would anticipate some phone cost overruns as state officials listened patiently while the winners fell to the floor laughing. Still, that would raise a billion dollars right there, and we'd be well on our way.

Naturally, you have to give the millionaires something in return, because nobody in their right mind would hand back a million bucks, especially to those who have demonstrated a preference for red ink over black ink.

Speaking strictly for me, here's what I'd want for my million claims: (1) Season tickets (good seats) to the Cubs, White Sox, Bulls, Blackhawks and Cardinals. Now I know the Cardinals technically are in Missouri, but as a border state, Missouri should pay Illinois something for the "cool" that crosses the river and rubs off on them; (2) lifelong amnesty on all speeding tickets, especially the 35 mph in a 20 mph zone and the 71 mph in a 65 mph zone, which I seem not

to be able to avoid; and (3) a cameo role in *The Sopranos*, where I get to say the line, "Hey, don't we have people in Illinois on the payroll?"

I'm sure other millionaires would require more, but that's all I'd really need.

State agencies have been asked to trim the fat, and that's fine until they start scraping the bone. Gov.-elect Blagojevich has said he doesn't want to raise taxes, but that may not be a realistic option once he gets a good look at the books. We've gotten into this bind over a period of time because projected revenues have been down, and the state has spent like a drunken sailor.

Over its nearly 30-year history, the lottery has contributed more than \$11 billion to the state. It contributes more than half a billion annually. And in fiscal year 2002, the lottery had \$1.59 billion in sales. This agency clearly has the dough Illinois needs to clear the books.

So the state needs to go to the nearest convenience store, buy a Quick Pick (investing in only one ticket is all that would be needed) and plug the ping-pong ball machines into that "special" outlet designed by some of our old "friends" in Chicago.

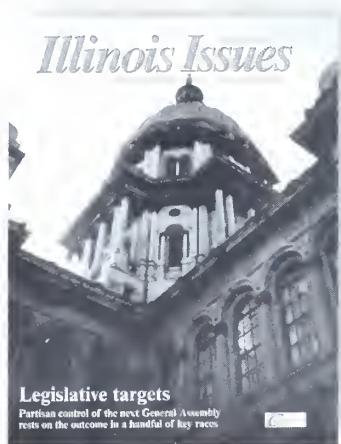
Hey, the idea is no more absurd than the \$3 billion hole that's already been dug. □

Mike Morsch can be reached by telephone at 217-206-6521 or through e-mail at morsch.michael@uis.edu.

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Charles N. Wheeler III



Nettlesome issues will test the new legislature and the new governor

by Charles N. Wheeler III

With the New Year comes a New Era in Illinois state government. When the 93rd General Assembly takes office on January 8, Democrats will control the Senate for the first time in a decade. Five days later, Rod Blagojevich will be inaugurated as the first Democratic governor in 26 years, bringing a commitment to change the way things are done in Springfield.

If the new legislature and the new governor really want to make their mark, a daunting trio of nettlesome issues will test their ingenuity and weigh their mettle. The long-standing challenges to policymakers include education finance, the criminal justice system and Illinois' tax structure.

Here's a look at each:

- School funding. Revamping the way Illinois pays for elementary and secondary education has been on the to-do list for decades. The problem is well-known: Because local school districts rely so heavily on property taxes, resources vary dramatically among districts, making it difficult for some to provide an adequate education for their students. The solution also seems obvious: Replace some local property taxes with state dollars, thus increasing the state's share of the costs and narrowing the resource gap between property-rich and property-poor districts.

What has been lacking for decades, however, has been the political will to enact the swap. Governors and legisla-

Could 2003 be the year for school funding reform? To be sure, significant obstacles exist. The state's fiscal condition is some \$1 billion worse, and Rod Blagojevich has vowed not to raise taxes.

tors alike generally have been too timid to endorse the state tax increase that would be needed to pay for the swap.

Reform proponents came close in 1997, when Gov. Jim Edgar proposed a 25 percent hike in income tax rates to replace \$900 million in school property taxes and provide \$600 million to boost spending levels for poor districts. The legislation cleared the Democratic-controlled House despite opposition from House Minority Leader Lee Daniels, an Elmhurst Republican, but Senate President James "Pate" Philip, a Republican from Wood Dale, refused to allow senators to vote on the measure, which Edgar and others were sure would have passed.

Could 2003 be the year for school

funding reform? To be sure, significant obstacles exist. The state's fiscal condition is some \$1 billion worse, and Blagojevich has vowed not to raise taxes.

But Daniels and Philip, the chief roadblocks in 1997, will be gone from GOP leadership. The Educational Funding Advisory Board and its chair, former state schools superintendent Robert Leininger, are determined to push for property tax cuts and a \$1,000-plus boost in the guaranteed per-pupil funding level. Their ideas are endorsed by Network 21, a coalition of business, labor, education and civic groups that wants to improve educational quality in the state's lowest performing schools, which generally have fewer resources than schools that do better in standardized testing.

Perhaps most importantly, though, four out of every five school districts expect to operate in the red this year, including some in relatively affluent suburban areas. Such widespread distress could help convince lawmakers that the time for temporizing is over.

- The Criminal Code. Since Gov. George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in January 2000, the spotlight has been on the state's deeply flawed system of capital punishment. The death penalty debate has overshadowed broader concerns about the state's criminal justice system, from the laws themselves through police and courtroom procedures to

sentencing and prison operations.

In May 2000, the governor named Deputy Gov. Matthew Bettenhausen to head a commission to update the Criminal Code of 1961 to make the law more fair for victims and defendants and easier to understand. The panel's efforts languished after the September 2001 terrorist attacks and Bettenhausen's appointment as the state's homeland security director, but problems with the Criminal Code have not gone away.

In recent weeks, for example, the Illinois Supreme Court tossed out a law that required party hosts to keep drunken minors from leaving the premises, because the provision conflicted with another law forbidding unlawful restraint. The court also held that a mandatory life sentence required for multiple murders was "particularly harsh and unconstitutionally disproportionate" in the case of a 15-year-old boy who was the lookout for a double murder in Chicago. Imposing the same sentence on the lookout and the shooter violated the constitutional requirement

Much of the current mix of taxes, rates and bases rests on 19th century or Depression-era economic conditions, rather than 21st century realities.

that the punishment fit the severity of the offense, the court said.

- Tax structure. Last February, a national research organization concluded that the state's tax system relies too heavily on local property taxes and regressive sales and excise taxes that place a higher burden on low-income residents as a percentage of income than on better-off citizens.

Moreover, both the income and the sales tax have relatively narrow bases and costly loopholes that restrict the state's ability to fund important government services, researchers said.

Illinois' perilous fiscal condition — with a projected budget deficit nearing \$3 billion for next fiscal year — could be the catalyst for a major overhaul of the state revenue structure. Much of the current mix of taxes, rates and bases rests on 19th century or Depression-era economic conditions, rather than 21st century realities. The sales tax, for example, applies only to sales of tangible property, which made sense when it was enacted in 1933. Now, services make up almost two-thirds of the state's economic activity, but few are subject to the sales tax. Adding services such as haircuts, club dues and repairs could generate some \$330 million, according to researchers.

Tackling any of these issues is not for the faint-hearted, but an outbreak of political courage would be one change that would be most welcome in Springfield. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting Program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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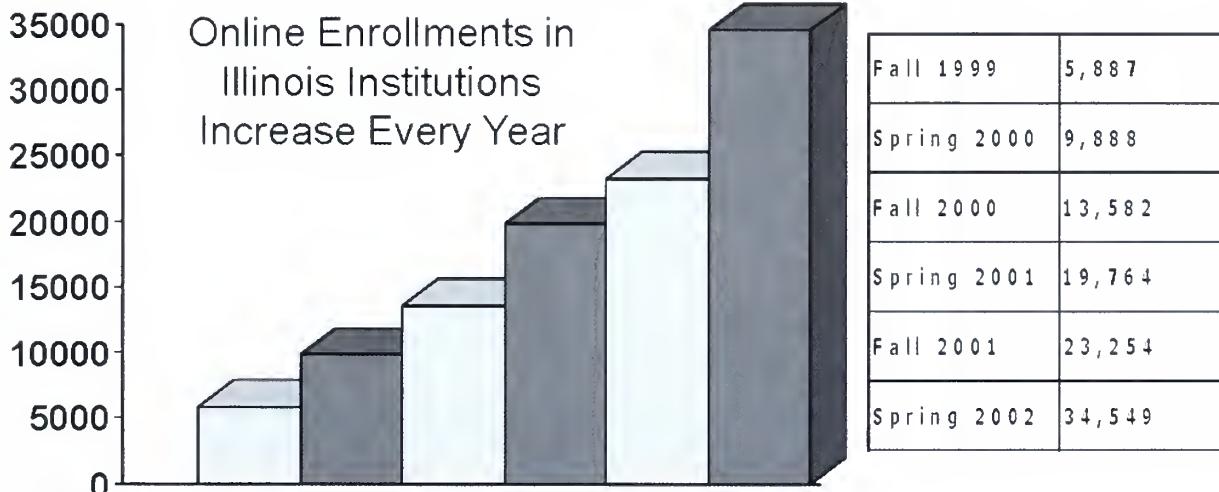
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